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MEMOIR

OF THE

Rev. SAMUEL DAVIES,

FORMERLY PRESIDENT OF THE COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY.

"The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance."

REVISED BY THE PUBLISHING COMMITTEE.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following is the first and only memoir of President Davies which has been published in a separate volume, or in a form adapted to general circulation. With the life of a man so highly distinguished, and so useful in his time, the religious public naturally feel a desire to become acquainted. It is to be regretted that the materials left us are so scanty, and that no fuller and more perfect an account of him can now be given. What follows, has been gathered chiefly from several religious periodical publications, more particularly from "The Evangelical and Literary Magazine."

BOSTON, MARCH 31, 1832.

MEMOIR, &c.

During the first part of the eighteenth century, religion was, perhaps, in a lower state of declension, throughout the British dominions, than at any other period since the reformation. The concurrent testimony of churchmen and dissenters establishes this fact. Many clergymen of various denominations had become very lukewarm, and in many instances exceedingly corrupt; and the people were ready enough to follow the steps of their spiritual guides. It was in this season of darkness that several men were born, who, afterwards, were burning and shining lights in the world. The names of Tennent, Blair, Edwards, Davies, and Whitefield,

may suffice to illustrate this remark. Since their day, vital piety has gradually increased, and the spiritual condition of the church of Christ has become more prosperous. The subject of this memoir was powerfully instrumental in producing the happy change.

Samuel Davies was born in the county of Newcastle, Delaware, Nov. 3, 1724. The christian names of his parents are unknown to us; nor can we say anything of the origin of the family, or trace it beyond his immediate progenitors. The father is represented to have been a plain farmer, in very moderate circumstances; the mother a very sensible and judicious woman; both were pious. Their son was a child of prayer; and was from the birth devoted to God by the name of Samuel. His mother is reported to have been eminently diligent and exemplary in the performance of her parental duties. Young Davies remained under the inspection and management of his parents until the age of ten; at which time he was sent to school. Of this interesting period of his life we know very little. It is recorded, and we can easily believe, that he acquired knowledge with wonderful facility. Until the age of twelve, he

represents himself as living carelessly, and utterly negligent of religion. Yet we are told that while he knew nothing of the power of godliness, he never could retire to sleep without prayer. One of his most frequent petitions was, that he might be fitted for the ministry of the gospel. At the early age of twelve, his conscience was awakened, and he very seriously inquired for the way of salvation. But we have been favored with no history of his religious exercises. That they were deep and powerful is manifest from his sermons. It would be highly interesting to trace the progress of such a mind as that of Davies—but this is not in our power. All that we know is, that he was principally educated under the direction of the Rev. Samuel Blair, of Fog's Manor, in Chester county, Pennsylvania. This gentleman was a native of Ireland. He came to America very early in life; and was educated by the Rev. William Tennent.* He was considered not only as one of the most learned and able, but one of the most pious and excellent men, that ever adorned the

* Miller's Life of Dr. Rodgers, page 17.

American church. We know that he inspired his pupil with strong affection for his person, and reverence for his character. In proof of this, we give two short extracts from a fragment of a journal kept by Mr. Davies, when on a mission to England in behalf of the College of New Jersey.

"Thursday, [Sept. 1753,] rode P. M. to Mrs. Blair's in company with Mr. Smith; and enjoyed much satisfaction in the free mutual communication of our Christian and ministerial exercises. How happy am I in having so many valuable friends in various parts! The sight of Mrs. Blair, and my old walks about her house in the happy days of my education, raised a variety of tender and solemn thoughts in my mind.—When I passed by the meeting-house, where I so often heard the *great* Mr. Blair, I could not help crying out, Oh! how dreadful is this place! this is no other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."

"*Tuesday, October*, 1753.—Rode to the Presbytery at Fog's Manor, solitary and pensive—was refreshed in the company of my dear brethren—Lodged at Mrs. Blair's where every

thing suggested to me the image of the *incomparable* Mr. Blair, once my minister and tutor, but now in superior regions."

Although little is now known concerning the youth of Davies, we are assured that he was an exemplary young Christian; that he was very strict and careful in keeping a record of his religious exercises; and that the knowledge of his having been in a peculiar manner devoted to God from his birth, was a powerful motive to fidelity and zeal in the service of his heavenly Father. He ascribed much to the prayers, instructions and pious example of his mother. It is not in vain that the faithful consecrate their children to God, and train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

We have every reason to believe that the circumstances of Davies's parents were not a little straightened, and that they met with considerable difficulties in supporting him through his education. We have heard an anecdote on this subject, the authenticity of which we cannot doubt, and which we think well worthy of being recorded.

It is known that the religious declension, of which mention was made before, extended to

Virginia. About the year 1740, some individuals in the county of Hanover were awakened to a deep concern for their eternal interests in a very extraordinary manner. A few leaves of *Boston's Fourfold State* fell into the hands of a wealthy planter, and made so deep an impression on his mind, that he never rested until he procured a copy of the work. This book, it is believed, was instrumental in affording light to his mind, and peace to his heart. Another gentleman, Mr. Samuel Morris, derived similar advantages from *Luther on the Galatians*. The books that had been so useful to these persons were read to others, and produced very great and happy effects. So deep was the sensation, that multitudes were accustomed to assemble, for the purpose of hearing Morris read. His house was in a short time too small to contain them; and a meeting-house was built for the purpose, long known by the name of *Morris's reading room*. In this state of things, the Rev. William Robinson, a member of the Presbytery of New Brunswick, was sent on a mission to the frontier settlements. On his tour, he entered Virginia, and preached with great acceptance among the Scotch and Irish, who had

made settlements in the counties of Prince Edward, Charlotte, and Campbell. At Cub Creek, in the county of Charlotte, he was heard by some of the young people from Hanover who had gone to visit their friends, and who soon sent back word what manner of man was among them. On receiving this intelligence, two messengers were immediately dispatched from Hanover for Mr. Robinson. He had left the place, but they followed in his tract and at length overtook him. He was prevailed on to consent to visit Hanover, and at the appointed time he came. For four days he continued among them, preaching to the crowds that had assembled at the reading room.* This is described as a very remarkable season. On Mr. Robinson's taking leave, some of the gentlemen presented him with a considerable sum of money, not merely as a compensation for his faithful labors among them, but principally as an expression of that gratitude they felt towards Mr. Robinson, as the honored instrument of so much good to them. But he modestly declined

* Perhaps this was the first four days' meeting ever held in America.

their liberality: assigning for the reason of his refusal, not only the delicacy of his and their situation—that the enemies of the cause of religion might, should he receive it, endeavor to represent him as a mere mercenary, and thus wound and injure the infant flock; but chiefly because he did not need it, the Lord having blessed him with independence as to fortune; and being thus able, he wished to labor without being burdensome to those among whom he went preaching the gospel. These reasons, though strong and unanswerable, could not silence the pleadings of their heart-felt gratitude—a gratitude which found no other way of exercising itself towards its object but by some offering of this kind. They therefore repeatedly urged its acceptance, but he constantly and firmly declined the offer. Seeing no hope of his receding from the determination he had taken not to receive their money, the committee intrusted with it put it into the hands of the gentleman with whom he was to lodge the last night of his stay in the county, with directions to convey it privately into his saddle-bags, not doubting but when, after his departure, he should find himself in possession of the money,

he would appropriate it to his own use. This was accordingly done. And in the morning Mr. Robinson, having taken an affectionate leave of his kind friends, took his saddle-bags to depart; but he found them much more ponderous than when he came there. Searching for the cause, like Joseph's brethren of old, he found the money in the sack's mouth. Pleased with the benevolent artifice, he smiling said, "I see you are resolved I shall have your money. I will take it. But, as I have before told you, I do not need it. I have enough. Nor will I appropriate it to my own use. But there is a young man of my acquaintance, of promising talents and piety, who is now studying with a view to the ministry; but his circumstances are embarrassing; he has not funds to support and carry him on without much difficulty. This money will relieve him from his pecuniary difficulties. I will take charge of it and appropriate it to his use. And so soon as he is licensed, we will send him to visit you. And if you should be pleased with him, and he should be pleased with you, it may be that you may now, by your liberality, be educating a minister for yourselves." The proposition was immediately

accepted, and the money faithfully appropriated to the benefit of young Davies while pursuing his Theological studies. "And that is the reason," said a pious old lady who communicated this, "that Mr. Davies came to Hanover; for he often used to say that he was inclined to settle in another place; but that he felt under obligation to the people of Hanover."—This anecdote is not only told by aged persons who were cotemporary with Davies, but is handed down by tradition, and related in terms of the same import with those used above, by the grandchildren of some of Mr. Davies's people.

It is delightful, from the present time, to look back to an occurrence *apparently* so trivial as the discovery of a few leaves in an old book, and trace the many important events connected with it; to see the workings of Providence accomplishing his purposes, and carrying on his great designs of mercy in our favored land. It is delightful to think on the ways of the Almighty, and contemplate the dealings and dispensations of the God of our Fathers.

Aided in the manner just recited, young Davies prosecuted his studies with alacrity, and was licensed in the year 1745, by the Presby-

tery of Newcastle, as a probationer for the ministry of the gospel. At this time he was in feeble, bad health, and was supposed to be far gone in a consumption. Expecting to live but a short time, he was instant in season and out of season, preaching by day, and enduring a hectic fever by night, which sometimes rendered him delirious, and made it necessary that he should be attended by watchers. It pleased God, however, to restore his health, and employ him for some years in active and useful service.

In the year 1747 he first came to Virginia. He was sent by the Presbytery only on a mission of a few weeks; for as was before remarked, his inclination was to settle in some other place. The people however received him as an angel of God, and urged their request with such earnestness and zeal that he was prevailed on to settle among them.

The condition of dissenters in Virginia at this time was by no means comfortable. A particular form of Christianity was established by law, and it is of the nature of an establishment to be exclusive and overbearing. A number of severe laws had been passed in the very spirit of the famous act of uniformity, enforcing at-

tendance at the parish church by various penalties. When the people flocked to Morris's reading room, they were presented and fined for absence from church. Morris himself was fined at least twenty times. The act of toleration had indeed passed, long before this period; but as there had never been an occasion for its application, it was very little understood in Virginia. Davies however seems to have studied it carefully, and had the forecast to procure the licensure of several places of worship before he commenced his operations; of these, one was in the county of Henrico, two in Hanover, and one in New-Kent. At this time, he was only twenty-three years old. It was certainly an interesting sight to behold a youth of his age engaged alone in support of the cause of vital piety, and religious liberty, while the talents, the learning, and the power of the State were against him. At first, he was regarded as a youthful adventurer, who would soon bring down his own cause. But the order of his zeal and the splendor of his talents soon brought him into notice, and excited great admiration. This generated opposition; and Davies was thought to be of so much importance that the general

court of the colony in the exercise of a high-handed authority, reversed the order of the county court for a meeting-house. This took place about the year 1748. On this, and on several other occasions, Davies appeared before the general court for the support of his cause. On one occasion, by special permission, he spoke for himself. Capt. John Morton, of Prince Edward county accompanied him at this time to Williamsburg. The circumstances of the case were often detailed by him with great satisfaction. From his narrative, it would seem that the permission accorded, proceeded rather from an inclination in the king's officers to amuse themselves with the poor Dissenters, than from any other motive. The attorney-general was Peyton Randolph. He took the position, that the act of toleration did not extend to the colony of Virginia; and delivered a speech of great legal learning. When Davies rose to reply, there was a general *titter* through the court. His very first remark, however, discovered so intimate an acquaintance with the law on that subject, that marks of surprise were manifest on every countenance. In a short time, the lawyers present began to whisper, "The attorney-

general has met with his match to-day, at any rate!" The position taken by Davies was, that if the act of toleration did not extend to the colony of Virginia, then neither did the act of uniformity. This was illustrated with a force, and ingenuity, and knowledge of law, perfectly astonishing, and completely victorious. The general sentiment among the members of the bar, as expressed in the hearing of Capt. Morton, was, "There is a most capital lawyer spoiled." This display of talents called forth universal admiration; and Davies was treated in Williamsburg with very great attention. The Lieutenant Governor, Sir William Gooch, and James Blair, one of the members of the general court, were marked in their civilities. Still, however, the Dissenters were occasionally harassed, until Mr. Davies returned from England. While there, he brought the case of his brethren before the court; and had the satisfaction to find that Sir Dudley Rider, the king's attorney-general in England, agreed with him against the king's attorney-general in Virginia. A copy of his opinion on the subject brought over by Mr. Davies, put the affair at rest; and Dissen-

ters' meeting-houses were allowed to be licensed here as they are in England.

In Gillies's Historical Collections, there is a very interesting letter from Davies to Bellamy, of which an extract will be here given. It is the only written account that we have met with of Davies's labors and success in the ministry, from the time of his settlement to the year 1751. This letter will give a favorable specimen of the liberal views of the writer.

"Upon my arrival, I petitioned the general court to grant me a license to officiate in and about Hanover, at four meeting-houses, which, after some delay, was granted, upon my qualifying according to the act of toleration. I preached frequently in Hanover, and some of the adjacent counties; and though the fervor of the late work was considerably abated, and my labors were not blessed with success equal to those of my brethren, yet I have reason to hope they were of service in several instances. The importunities they used with me to settle with them, were invincible; and upon my departure they sent a call for me to the Presbytery. After I returned from Virginia, I spent near a year

under melancholy and consumptive languishments, expecting death. In the spring of 1749, I began slowly to recover, though I then looked upon it only as the intermission of a disorder that would finally prove mortal. But upon the arrival of a messenger from Hanover, I put my life in my hand, and determined to accept of their call, hoping I might live to prepare the way for some more useful successor, and willing to expire under the fatigues of duty, rather than in voluntary negligence. The Hon. Sir William Gooch, our late governor, always discovered a ready disposition to allow us all claimable privileges, and the greatest aversion to persecuting measures; but, considering the shocking reports spread abroad concerning us by officious malignants, it was no great wonder the council discovered a considerable reluctance to tolerate us. Had it not been for this, I persuade myself they would have shown themselves the guardians of our legal privileges, as well as generous patriots to their country, which is the character generally given them.

"In October, 1748, besides the four meeting-houses already mentioned, the people petitioned for the licensing of three more, which with

great difficulty was obtained. Among the seven, I have hitherto divided my time. Three of them lay in Hanover county, the other four in the counties of Henrico, Carolina, Louisa, and Goochland. The nearest are twelve or fifteen miles distant from each other, and the extremes about forty. My congregation is very much dispersed; and notwithstanding the number of meeting-houses, some live twenty, some thirty, and a few forty miles from the nearest. Were they all compactly situate in one county, they would be sufficient to form three distinct congregations. Many of the church people also attend, when there is a sermon at any of these houses. This I looked upon at first as mere curiosity; but as it continues, and in some places seems to increase, I cannot but look upon it as a happy token of their being at length thoroughly engaged. And I have the greater reason to hope so now, as experience has confirmed my former hopes; fifty or sixty families having thus been happily entangled in the net of the gospel by their own curiosity, or some such motive. There are about three hundred communicants in my congregation, of whom the greatest number are, in the judgment of rational

charity, real Christians; besides some who through excessive scrupulousness, do not seek admission to the Lord's table. There is also a number of negroes. Sometimes I see an hundred or more among my hearers. I have baptized about forty of them within these three years, upon such a profession of faith as I then judged credible. Some of them, I fear, have apostatized; but others, I trust, will persevere to the end. I have had as satisfying evidences of the sincere piety of several of them, as ever I had from any person in my life, and their artless simplicity, their passionate aspirations after Christ, their incessant endeavors to know and do the will of God, have charmed me. But alas! while my charge is so extensive, I cannot take sufficient pains with them for their instruction, which often oppresses my heart.

"There have been instances of unhappy apostacy among us; but, blessed be God, not many in proportion to the number brought under concern. At present there are a few under promising impressions; but, in general, a lamentable security prevails. Oh for a little reviving in our bondage!—I might have given you a particular account of the conversion of some persons here,

as indeed there are some uncommon instances of it, but I shall only observe in general, that abstracting from particular circumstances, the work of conversion has been carried on in such steps as are described by experimental divines, as Allein, Shepherd, Stoddard, Flavel, &c. And nothing confirms me more in the truth of their opinions concerning experimental piety, than this agreement and uniformity as to substance, in the exercises of those that can make the fairest claim to saving grace.

"I forgot to inform you, in its proper place, that the Rev. Mr. Davenport was sent by the synod to Hanover last summer, and continued here about two months; and, blessed be God, he did not labor in vain. Some were brought under concern, and many of the Lord's people much revived, who can never forget the instrument of it. Thus, dear Sir, I have given you a brief account of what I am persuaded you will readily own to be the work of the Lord. We claim no infallibility, but we must not fall into skepticism. Why should we pretend to promote the conversion of men, if we cannot have any satisfying knowledge of it, when it appears? Indeed the evidence of its divinity here is so

irresistible, that it has extorted an acknowledgment from some from whom it could hardly have been expected. Were you, Sir, a narrow bigot, you would, no doubt, rejoice to hear that there are now some hundreds of Dissenters in a place, where, a few years ago, there were ten; but I assure myself of your congratulations on a nobler account, because a considerable number of perishing sinners are gained to the blessed Redeemer, with whom, though you never see them here, you may spend a blissful eternity. After all, poor Virginia demands your compassion; for religion at present is but like the cloud which Elijah's servant saw. O, that it may spread and cover the land!"

In the foregoing letter, mention is made by Mr. Davies of the interest he felt in the religious instruction of the negroes, and of the success which attended his labors among them. Still more striking evidence on this point is furnished in letters written several years later. Addressing a friend in London, from whom he had received a donation of books to be distributed among the destitute of his congregation, under date of March, 1755, he says, "the poor neg-

lected negroes, who are so far from having money to purchase books, that they themselves are the property of others; who were originally African savages, and never heard of Jesus or his gospel, till they arrived at the land of their slavery in America; whom their masters generally neglect, and whose souls none care for, as though immortality were not a privilege common to them as with their masters;—these poor unhappy Africans are objects of my compassion, and I think the most proper objects of the society's charity. The inhabitants of Virginia are computed to be about 300,000 men, the one half of which number are supposed to be negroes. The number of those who attend my ministry at particular times, is uncertain, but generally about 300, who give a stated attendance; and never have I been so struck with the appearance of an assembly, as when I have glanced my eye to that part of the meeting-house where they usually sit, *adorned*, (for so it has appeared to me,) with so many black countenances eagerly attentive to every word they hear, and frequently bathed in tears. A considerable number of them (about an hundred) have been baptized, after a proper time for instruction, and having

given credible evidence, not only of their acquaintance with the important doctrines of the Christian religion, but also a deep sense of them on their minds, attested by a life of strict piety and holiness. As they are not sufficiently polished to dissemble with a good grace, they express the sentiments of their souls so much in the language of simple nature, and with such genuine indications of sincerity, that it is impossible to suspect their professions, especially when attended with a truly Christian life and exemplary conduct. There are multitudes of them in different places, who are willing and eagerly desirous to be instructed, and embrace every opportunity of acquainting themselves with the doctrines of the gospel; and though they have generally very little help to learn to read, yet, to my agreeable surprise, many of them, by dint of application in their leisure hours, have made such a progress, that they can intelligibly read a plain author, and especially their Bibles; and pity it is that any of them should be without them. Some of them have the misfortune to have irreligious masters, and hardly any of them are so happy as to be furnished with these assistances for their improvement. Before I had

the pleasure of being admitted a member of your society, they were wont frequently to come to me with such moving accounts of their necessities in this respect, that I could not help supplying them with books to the utmost of my small abilities; and when I distributed those amongst them which my friends with you sent over, I had reason to think that I never did an action in all my life that met with so much gratitude from the receivers. I have already distributed all the books that I brought over, which were proper for them. Yet still on Saturday evenings, the only time they can spare, my house is crowded with numbers of them, whose very countenances carry the air of importunate petitioners for the same favors with those who came before them. But, alas, my stock is exhausted, and I must send them away grieved and disappointed. Permit me, Sir, to be an advocate with you, and by your means with your generous friends, in their behalf. The books I principally want for them are Watts's Psalms and Hymns, and Bibles. The two first they cannot be supplied with any other way than by a collection, as they are not among the books which your society give away. I am the rather importunate

for a good number of these, as I cannot but observe that the negroes, above all the human species that I ever knew, have an ear for music, and a kind of ecstatic delight in psalmody; and there are no books they learn so soon, or take so much pleasure in, as those used in that heavenly part of divine worship."

After having received another supply of books, Mr. Davies writes, "When the books arrived, I gave public notice of it after sermon at the next opportunity, and desired such negroes as could read, and also such white people as would make a good use of them, and were so poor that they could not buy such books, to come to me at my house, and I should distribute them among them. For some time after this, the poor slaves, whenever they could get an hour's leisure from their masters, would hurry away to my house, and receive the charity with all the genuine indications of passionate gratitude which unpolished nature could give, and which affectation and grimace would mimic in vain. The books were all very acceptable, but none more so than the *Psalms* and *Hymns*, which enable them to gratify their peculiar taste

for psalmody. Sundry of them have lodged all night in my kitchen, and sometimes when I have waked about 2, or 3 o'clock in the morning, a torrent of sacred harmony has poured into my chamber, and carried my mind away to heaven. In this seraphic exercise, some of them spend almost the whole night. I wish, Sir, you and other benefactors could hear any of these sacred concerts. I am persuaded it would surprise and please you more than an Oratorio, or a St. Cecilia's day."

We now turn back to the year 1751, the date of Mr. Davies's letter to Dr. Bellamy. Although in the extract of this letter, given above, he seems to express some mortification and despondency, because so little was accomplished by his instrumentality, yet we have satisfactory evidence that he produced a powerful impression wherever he went. His home was in the county of Hanover, about twelve miles from Richmond; but his labors were extended through a very considerable part of the State; and he acquired an influence which perhaps no other preacher of the gospel in Virginia ever possessed. It was the influence of fervent piety and zeal, directed by

a mind of uncommon compass and force. We have learned from aged people who sat under his ministry, that his powers of persuasion seemed sufficient for the accomplishment of any purpose which a minister of the gospel would undertake. Many, for instance, who had grown up in ignorance of religion, who were married and settled in life, and had children around them, were prevailed on to learn the elements of religious knowledge. A mother might often be seen rocking her infant in a cradle, sewing some garment for her husband, and learning her catechism at the same time. A girl employed in spinning would place her book of questions at the head of the wheel, and catching a glance at it as she ran up her yarn on the spindle, would thus prepare for public catechising. And boys who were accustomed to follow the plough, were often to be seen, while their horses were feeding at mid-day, reclining under an old oak in the yard, learning the weekly task. Young and old were willing to be taught by their preacher; and when assembled for catechetical instruction, the elders of the church, and heads of families, were always examined first. This course of instruction, however, was not brief,

and quickly finished, as is the case now. Households were generally furnished with a few standard works of good old times, and were expected to study them carefully. The writer of this has scarcely ever visited a family, the heads or fathers of which belonged to Mr. Davies's congregation, in which he did not find books, or remnants of books, such as Watson's Body of Divinity, Boston's Fourfold State, Luther on the Galatians, Flavel's Works, Baxter's Call to the Unconverted, and Saint's Everlasting Rest, Allein's Alarm, and others of similar character. And these were studied with a care and attention which greatly promoted the improvement of the people. In fact, Davies's churches were *schools*, in which the people were taught better things than the ancient sages ever communicated to their disciples. The effect of this discipline remains to this day.

This last remark is verified in a very striking degree among the posterity of the negroes who became disciples of Davies. There is now a considerable congregation of their descendants at Polegreen, a church in Hanover, at present under the pastoral care of the Rev. John D. Blair. But many of the members of Davies's

church belonged to the estate of Col. Byrd. These were sold, and several of them taken to the county of Charlotte. The writer has seen some of the survivors who could read well, and knew perfectly the Assembly's Catechism. At this day, there are not fewer than one hundred negro communicants in a congregation called Cub Creek, in the county just mentioned. Of these, a very large proportion can read, and are instructed in religious doctrines and duties beyond many professors among white people. And they afford an experiment of sixty or seventy year's standing, of the effect of this sort of discipline among slaves. And we confidently state the result to be more industry, fidelity, and submissiveness; less intemperance, dishonesty, lying, and laziness, than are to be found among an equal number of this class in any other part of the county. This has been so notorious, that the owners of these slaves have been compelled to acknowledge that the services of the preachers were more profitable than those of all the overseers ever employed by them. The writer of this has had opportunities of gaining information on this subject, which enables him to speak with the utmost confidence. And all that he

has seen, induces the most earnest wish, that, generally, the slaves in Virginia were subjected to the same discipline.

In the course of four or five years after the settlement of Davies in Hanover, he found it impossible to afford even a monthly supply of preaching to the congregations organized by him. Accordingly he sought for and found an assistant in Mr. John Todd, a young preacher educated in Pennsylvania. He accepted a call from a congregation "in and about the upper part of Hanover in Virginia," and was installed Nov. 12th, 1752. The installation sermon was preached by Davies, and published at the desire of the hearers.

About this time, Mr. Davies addressed a letter to the Rev. Dr. Dawson, one of the established (Episcopal) clergy of Virginia, which, as it displays much of the spirit of the man, his genuine catholicism, and his ardent desire for the salvation of souls, deserves to be inserted here. "I am not fond, Sir, of disseminating sedition and schism. I have no ambition to presbyterianize the colony. But I hope I may declare, without suspicion of ostentation or wilful falsification, that I have a sincere zeal, how-

ever languid and impotent, to propagate the Catholic religion of Jesus in its life and power; though I feel but little anxiety about the denomination its genuine subjects assume. The profession of Christianity is universal in this colony; but alas! Sir, if the religion of the Bible be the test of men's characters, and the standard of their final doom, multitudes, *multitudes*, are in a perishing condition! Their ignorance, their negligence, their wrong notions of vital Christianity, their habitual neglect of its known duties, their vicious practice proclaim it aloud; and he that can persuade himself of the contrary, in spite of evidence, is possessed of a charity under no rational or scriptural regulations. For my part, Sir, should I believe that religion is in a flourishing state in this colony, I must renounce the Bible, disbelieve my eyes, and my ears, and rush into universal skepticism. Could I indulge the pleasing dream, my life below the skies would be an anticipation of heaven.——I do not conclude religion is in so lamentable a state, because I see the generality pray by form, receive the sacrament kneeling, &c. or in a word, because they conform to the debated peculiarities of the established church. No, Sir,

I freely grant these things are not the test of men's characters; these may be so far from hindering, that for aught I know, they may promote living religion in such as have no scruples about them, though the case would be otherwise with others: but the unwelcome evidences that force this conclusion, are, the general neglect, and stupid unconcernedness about religion; the habitual omission of its duties, and the vicious practices that glare upon me around, and which are utterly inconsistent with true religion in any denomination (in a Presbyterian, as well as a Churchman.) I pretend to no superior sanctity above the established clergy, who are piously aiming at the great end of their office; and I allow myself the pleasure of hoping there are such in Virginia. I pretend to no Apostolic powers and privileges, immediate revelations and impulses, but renounce the claim as presumptuous and enthusiastical. I am as mean and insignificant a creature, as you can well conceive me to be. But I dare profess, Sir, that even a heart so insensible as mine, is at times dissolved into compassion, and racked with agonies of zeal, when so dismal a scene opens around me. I dare profess, I cannot stand an unconcerne

inactive spectator of the ruin of my fellow sinners, but would very gladly spend and be spent for them, though the more abundantly I love them, the less I should be loved. I am bold to avow so much pious humanity, as that I would exert myself to the utmost, in my little sphere, for their recovery; and since I am disabled, by some conscientious scruples, to attempt it in the communion of the established church, I humbly conceive I am warranted to attempt it in a separate communion. This, Sir, is my only design; and (as I told you in conversation) I think it would be no great stretch of charity to suppose that even a dissenter may be more distressed to see multitudes rushing on in a thoughtless career to ruin, than to see them conform to the church of England; and more zealous to convert them from sin to holiness, than from party to party."

On this we shall only remark, that from the foundation of the Presbyterian church in Virginia, in 1747, to the present day, the great object of Presbyterians has been, not to convert men from "party to party," but from "sin to holiness." They have carried on no controver-

sies; they have adopted no measures of proselytism; they have recognized all, who profess the great doctrines of the reformation, as their brethren, and have held communion with them.

Early in the year 1753, Davies was appointed by the trustees of the college of New Jersey to visit Great Britain, in company with Gilbert Tennent, to solicit donations for the college. He accepted this appointment, and was absent from Virginia at least eighteen months. We have before us a fragment of a diary kept by him (as before mentioned) while on his journey. From this we shall make copious extracts; as it will bring the reader to a more intimate acquaintance with this distinguished man, than any narrative that we could construct. It commences thus:—

A DIARY,

Begun July 2d, 1753.

"Gratitude to the God of my mercies, constrains me to own myself the favorite child of divine Providence; and it generally has disposed of me in a manner different from, and contrary to, my expectation, my purpose, and

desire. Such an unexpected and undesired event was my separation from my brethren, and settlement in Virginia; and yet I have since looked upon it as a providential dispensation for the recovery of my health, to harden me against opposition, to increase my popularity, to make me acquainted with the world as well as books, to supply the most necessitous congregations, and upon the whole to enlarge the sphere of my usefulness more extensively than so insignificant a creature had reason to expect. And now as divine Providence, quite contrary to my expectation, seems to call me to a very important embassy for the church, and for the public, and as it will tend much to my future satisfaction to have the reasons of my procedure by me for a review in the hour of perplexity; I think it expedient to state the affair in writing, and to keep a diary of all the remarkable occurrences I may meet with in my voyage, which I intend to begin about —— hence, unless Providence lay something in my way that may acquit me of the obligation which I seem to lie under to undertake it. And it is my prayer to the God of my life, and the guide of my youth, that he, who condescends to manage even my mean affairs,

would clear up the path of duty before me, and make it as agreeable as it is obvious; whether it lead me to the ends of the earth, or confine me to the exercise of my ministry at home.

"The college of New Jersey, erected about eight years ago with the most ample privileges, is of the greatest importance to the interests of religion and learning in three colonies, New York, the Jerseys, and Pennsylvania, and to dissenters in Maryland, Virginia, and both Carolinas.

"There are now about 3,000 pounds in the college fund; but this will hardly be sufficient for the erection of proper buildings; and if it should all be paid out for that end, there will be nothing left for the maintenance of the professors and tutors, to furnish a college library, and to support pious youth for the ministry who are unable to maintain themselves at learning.

"Upon application made to Great Britain, there has been encouragement given to expect some assistance, especially if some proper persons were sent over to represent the affair, and to solicit and receive contributions.

The trustees first endeavored to employ Mr. Pemberton in that service, who was well quali-

fied, had no family at the time, and was willing to undertake the embassy. But his congregation most unreasonably refused, though Mr. Cummings, his colleague, was still to continue with them, and another minister would have been appointed to officiate in his stead.

"After this disappointment, (near two years ago,) some of the trustees importuned me to undertake the affair; but considering my youth and other defects, I could hardly think them in earnest. However, I mentioned the personal, domestic, and congregational difficulties in my way, and urged them with as much earnestness as was necessary to resist their importunity. Last fall, they renewed their application, and I my refusal, and I never expected to hear more of it.

"But last winter, the board of trustees unanimously voted me to undertake the voyage. When I was informed of it by letter from the worthy president, Burr, it struck me into a consternation and perplexity unknown before. All the tender passions of the husband, the minister, the father, and the son, (all which relations centre upon me,) formed an insurrection in my breast, against the proposal; and with these I

have struggled ever since. My conjugal anxieties were increased by the languishing state of my tenderer and better part, which my absence for so long a time perhaps might increase. I was also afraid, lest my dear congregation, whose hearts are so excessively set on me, should suffer by my absence. The danger of the seas likewise appeared terrible; and above all, my just consciousness of my want of qualifications for so important an embassy, sunk my spirit; and yet my remonstrances on this head would not be regarded by others.

"After all the deliberation and consultation that was in my power, I determined to take no notice of the many difficulties in my way, that were superable, but to insist only on these two things as the condition of my compliance; the one for the support of my family, and the relief of my congregation, viz. that a person should be sent to supply my pulpit during my absence, who should be maintained at the expense of the college, that my salary might run on for the support of my family. These proposals I sent in a letter to the trustees per post; but not trusting to that loitering and uncertain medium of correspondence, I despatched a messenger to

bring me an immediate answer. Upon his return, I found the trustees had readily consented to my proposals; and therefore expected my compliance with their vote."

The journal then goes on to state a variety of reasons why the voyage should be undertaken. The statement exhibits a delicacy and scrupulousness of conscience, and an attention to the indications of Providence, which clearly evince the sincerity and piety of the writer. Among others, he adverts to these.

"The various opportunities I may have of personal improvement, and that in things in which a pedant and a recluse is most deficient; the various friendships that may be contracted, which may tend much to the honor and security of dissenters here, who stand so much in need of patronage, are also considerable excitements.

"When I consider that there is so much need to make some attempts for the security and enlargement of the dissenters in Virginia, and that if I were obliged to undertake the voyage for that end alone, at the expense of the congregation, it would be very burdensome to them

and to me, I cannot but conclude that it is with a view to this, that Providence has directed the trustees to make application to me: for considering my known want of qualifications, and the little acquaintance the most of the trustees have with me, their vote appears to me utterly unaccountable, without supposing such a providential direction. This is the more remarkable, as this seems, on many accounts, the most proper crisis to do something in behalf of the dissenters here, as Mr. Tennent's influence, in conjunction with mine, will probably be of great service in the affair, and as it will not carry so selfish and irritating an aspect to be managed by the bye, as if it were made the sole business.

"The commissioners for Indian affairs will be glad of this opportunity for the propagation of the religion of Jesus, among the poor savages; and it is likely we shall succeed in raising contributions for that end. And oh! how transporting the thought that these barbarians may be cultivated by divine grace in the use of proper means, and polished into genuine disciples of the blessed Jesus! For this alone it would be worth our while to spend and be spent."

One of his principal difficulties arose from the state of his wife's health. This however, as well as all others, were overruled, and on September 3d, 1753, he set out from home. Under this date the following note occurs in his diary: "This morning I felt the painful rupture of the tender relative ties which bind my heart to Hanover. I took my leave of some thousands yesterday in public; and to-day I parted with some of my secret friends, and my dear, dear spouse, my honored parents, and three helpless children, and left them in a flood of tears. To thee, O Lord, I then solemnly committed them; and now I renew the dedication. I know not if ever I shall see them again; but my life and theirs is in the hands of divine Providence, and therefore shall be preserved as long as is fit.

"*Sunday.* Preached at Mr. Finley's on Deut. x. 13, a sermon which I preached in Hanover with great satisfaction and prospect of success; but alas, I have lost that spirit with which it was first delivered; and indeed I can but rarely retain the spirit of preaching in the hurries of a journey. The materials of the sermon were very solemn, and nothing appears to me a more unnatural incongruity, than to speak

the most solemn things with a trifling spirit. Indeed the incongruity appeared to me so great, that I was obliged to omit sundry things, though written before me in my notes, for want of a heart to express them with suitable tenderness and fervor. There appeared some small solemnity among the hearers; but oh! how far short of what I have seen in this place in the days of the right hand of the Most High!

"Conversed with my ingenious and dear friend, Mr. Finley, in the evening, and communicated to him my sentiments upon the great influence which the body has to deprave the soul; which I apprehend is much greater than is generally supposed,—which appears from the frequent use of the metaphor, *flesh*, in the Scriptures to denote moral depravity, which supposes that the *flesh*, literally taken, has a special causality in it; otherwise there would be no ground for the metaphor. And as the variety of bodily habits may be the occasion of a variety of sinful inclinations, so the habit of the body may be constantly such, amid all its changes; that it may perpetually influence the mind to sin in general.

"*Monday, Sept.* 10*th*, 1753.—Continued at

Mr. Finley's. Alas, I have been perplexed this day with the vigorous insurrections of sin in my heart; but my resistance and humiliation has not been proportioned. Oh! wretched man that I am, &c.

"*Tuesday.*—Mr. Roan and Mr. Smith met in committee, and Mr. Finley and I, in conjunction with them, revised and corrected a draft drawn up by Mr. Blair, of a warning or testimony of the Presbytery of Newcastle against several errors and evil practices of Mr. John Cuthbertson. The errors on which the Presbytery animadvert are these—That God has made over Christ and all his benefits to all that hear the gospel by *a deed of gift* (as he affects to speak) so that every sinner that hears the gospel offer, ought to put in a claim of right to him as his Saviour in *particular*—That saving faith consists in a persuasion that Christ is *mine*, and that he died for *me in particular*.

"*Thursday.*—Came to Newark, and was received with much affection by the worthy president. Was honored with a visit and free conversation with his excellency the governor. Was uneasy to find that the trustees seem to expect I should furnish myself with clothes in

this embassy. With what pleasure would I do it, were it in my power; but alas! it is not, and therefore, notwithstanding all the pliableness of my nature, I must insist on their providing for me in this respect, as one condition of my undertaking the voyage.

"*Sunday.*—Heard the president preach a valedictory sermon to the candidates for a degree, who are to leave the college this week. His subject was, 'And now, my son, the Lord be with thee, and prosper thee.' And I was amazed to see how readily good sense and accurate language flowed from him extempore. The sermon was very affecting to me, and might have been so to the students.

"*Wednesday.*—This day I delivered a Thesis, (Personales Distinctiones in Trinitate sunt æternæ,) and vindicated it in a public dispute against three opponents, and afterwards was honored with the degree of Master of Arts.

"*Friday evening.*—Took the advice of the honorable William Smith, Esq. upon the affair of the dissenters in Virginia. His opinion was, that the reversing the order of the county court for a meeting-house, would be a sufficient ground of complaint in England.

"*Monday, Oct.* 1*st*.—Lodged at Mr. Brainerd's the good missionary among the Indians, and was pleased with his accounts of the progress of religion among them.

"*Tuesday*.—Took a view of the Indian town; and was pleased at the affection of the poor savages for their minister, and his condescension to them."

A few days after this, the Synod of New York and Philadelphia met in Philadelphia. Here Davies met with his brethren, and appears, from his journal, to have enjoyed their society with most exquisite relish. He speaks in most exalted terms of the eloquence, learning and piety of Mr. Bostwick, saying that he "was charmed with both his matter and manner." The late venerable Dr. Rodgers is never mentioned without some epithet of endearment. For instance, after recording the opening of Synod, he adds, "Saw my dear friend Mr. Rodgers, and many of my brethren." But nothing made him forgetful of his family and flock in Hanover.

"*Saturday*.—Attended on the Synod, and used my utmost endeavors to obtain some

supplies for my dear people, besides Mr. Wright; and succeeded so far that Messrs. Brainerd, Rodgers, Henry, Bay, Blair, and J. Finley were appointed to go there four or six weeks each. I hope this will turn to the benefit of my dear congregation. O that God may go with his messengers thither!

"*Monday, Oct. 8th.*—Preached a sermon in the morning from Isaiah lxvi. 1, 2. And through the great mercy of God, my heart was passionately affected with the subject; and what tended not a little to increase my affection was my observing the venerable Mr. G. Tennent weeping beside me in the pulpit. Spiritual poverty and humility appeared very amiable and charming to me. Humility is not that gloomy, sullen, mortifying thing which it is generally accounted, but a most sweet and pleasing grace. O! it is no small ingredient in the happiness of a penitent, and a most congruous ornament to a mean degenerate, creature.

"Visited the Academy, in company with sundry of my brethren, and was entertained with a view of what was remarkable in it. Heard some of the little boys declaim; and though I was pleased with their distinct and accurate pronun-

ciation, I thought that in delivering some of the orations, especially those of Brutus and Mark Antony, they were extremely languid, and discovered nothing of the fire and pathos of a Roman soul. Indeed this is one great defect of modern oratory. A defect few seem sensible of, or labor to correct.

"*Monday, Oct. 22d.*—Visited Mrs. Johnston in sickness, and had some conversation with her about her state. I was secretly afraid of her piety, and yet I could find no sufficient evidence to disprove it. Mrs. Rodgers unbosomed herself to me; and gave me an account of some affecting, overwhelming views of the wisdom of God in the work of redemption, which she had lately had, that were really astonishing. How good is God to his children even in this melancholy world! In some happy hours, they rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

"*Friday, Nov. 9th.*—Was unexpectedly detained in Chester by bad weather. Spent the day in pensive sadness, 'stung with the thoughts of home,' and distressed with my own corruptions. 'Behold I am vile.'

Sin haunts my steps where'er I fly,
In every place is ever nigh;
As streams from mountain springs attend
The travellers still, as they descend,
So sin, the source of all my wo,
Still bubbles up where'er I go.
Sin spreads a dark tremendous cloud
Of horrors o'er my solitude;
Presents a thousand forms of death
To shock my soul from duty's path;
Wraps present time in dreadful gloom,
And damps my hope of time to come;
Intimidates my soul ashore,
And makes old Ocean louder roar;
Gives darker horrors to the storm,
And danger a more shocking form.
Companion dire by land or sea!
No bliss, no calm, till freed from thee,
And change of place is change of misery.

"*Sunday, Nov. 11th.*—Heard Mr. Rodgers preach a very good sermon on this text—'Herein is love, not that we loved God,' &c. And my mind was deeply impressed with such thoughts as these,—We have heard a great deal of the sufferings of our Jesus; and what effect has the pathetic representation upon the hearers? Were we informed that a dear friend or relative was seized by a company of ruffians, and put to the most extreme tortures, what horrors would strike us! What tender passions rise in every breast! Why then are we not more affected with the sufferings of this Jesus? Who is

he? Is he some worthless being that we are no way concerned with? Or is he a criminal, that deserved all the agonies he suffered? If this were the case, our stupidity would not be so strange. But how strange must it appear, when we are told that this Jesus is the man that is God's fellow! The Saviour of sinners! Crucified for our sins!

"Received the Lord's supper with some degree of dispassionate solemnity and calmness of mind, and counted it my happiness to have an opportunity of joining in so solemn an ordinance with my dear Mr. Rodgers."

Saturday, Nov. 17th, 1753.—Davies and his friend Tennent went on board a vessel bound for London, and on the next day set sail. It might be expected that the grandeur and majesty of the ocean would make a powerful impression on a mind like that of Davies; but sea-sickness, during a great part of the voyage, prevented his having those strong conceptions, which nature in tumult and uproar is accustomed to produce in the minds of her votaries. We have met with only one or two remarks on this subject in the diary.

"*Monday, Nov. 19th.*—We are now out of

sight of land. *Cœlum undique, undique pontus.* It would be particularly pleasing to me to survey the wonders of the majestic ocean, but I have been confined to bed most of the day, and am so much out of my element, that I am neither fit for conversation nor curious observation. However, I feel calm within, and resigned to the Divine will. O Lord, bless my dear family!

"*Monday, Nov. 26th.*—It is a most majestic survey, to see how the waves rise in ridges of mountains, pursue each other, and dash in angry conflict; and it is most amazing how we can possibly live upon so turbulent an element. To form and rule such an ocean is a work becoming a God."

On the 25th of December, Davies and Tennent arrived in London, and were very kindly received. The diary kept during its author's continuance in that city is very entertaining. We shall, however, be under the necessity of making only a few extracts.

"*Wednesday, Dec. 26th.*—Were visited by Mr. Hall, a venerable old gentleman, author of some of the Lime Street Sermons, who seems to

be of a true Puritanic spirit, and full of religion. Were visited by Mr. Gibbons, my dear correspondent, who informed us of the general apostacy of the dissenters from the principles of the reformation. He told me that Dr. Doddridge's motto under his picture was, *Dum vivimus, vivamus;* and that Dr. Young had erected two schools, over the door of one of which he had written, *Doctrinæ filia virtus;* and of the other, *Filia matre pulchrior.* Were visited by good Mr. Crutenden, who sent me over 10 pounds sterling worth of books to be distributed among the poor in Virginia.

"*Sunday, Dec. 30th.*—In the afternoon, I preached for one Mr. Dews, who was indisposed, in a Baptist congregation, with some freedom, on Jer. xxxi. 18—20. It is grievous to see how small the congregations are in this vast city. I find Mr. Stennet, a Baptist minister, has most influence in court of any of the dissenting ministers.

"*Monday, Dec. 31st.*—There is such a number of beggars here, that one cannot walk the streets without being pained at their importunity; for he cannot supply them all; and there

are so many impostors among them, that it is hard to distinguish real objects of charity.

"*Tuesday, Jan. 1st,* 1754.—Went to hear Mr. Chandler in Salter's Hall, and was pleasingly entertained with a sermon on the parable of the unjust steward. Mr. C. is undoubtedly a most ingenious, accurate gentleman; but I did not discern so much experimental religion in his discourse as I could wish. He has formerly been suspected of Arminianism and Socinianism; but now appears to be a moderate Calvinist. He promised his influence in favor of our design. We afterwards waited on Dr. Guise, and informed him of our business; but he seemed to discourage us, on account of the many annual expenses lying upon the dissenters in this city, for the relief of the poor, for the support of ministers in the country, the education of youth, &c. We find it is a disadvantage that we have so few letters to the Presbyterians here, who are the most numerous and rich.

"*Monday, Jan. 7th.*—In the evening, visited Mr. Winter, a Congregational minister; but his dry orthodoxy, and severe reflections upon those that deviated from rigid Calvinism, were dis-

agreeable to me. Heard good Mr. Whitefield in the evening.

"*Thursday, Jan.* 10*th.*—Visited Dr. Jennings and were kindly received. He appears a sociable, affectionate, and pious man. He keeps an academy of about 20 students. He seemed to favor our design; but was apprehensive that the privileges granted in our charter were so ample, that, if it were known at court, they would be curtailed; especially since the government here would not allow the colleges in New England the power of conferring any degree above A. M., though it was granted them by a law of their own province.

"*Sunday, Jan.* 13*th.*—In the afternoon preached for Mr. Gibbons, on these words, 'I will be your God, and ye shall be my people.' I had a good deal of readiness and vivacity, though, alas! but little tender solemnity. Spent the evening in conversation with dear Mr. Gibbons, who was much affected and pleased with my sermon, and proposed to me to publish it with a collection of his, which he intended for the press.

"*Tuesday, Jan.* 15*th.*—Heard Dr. Guise in Pinner's Hall preach a judicious, experimental

discourse. It was well adapted to comfort the people of God; but the langor of his delivery, and his promiscuous, undistinguishing manner of address, seemed to take away its energy and pungency.

"*Wednesday, Jan. 16th.*—Visited Mr. Pike, an independent minister. He appears sound in principle, and a great friend to experimental religion, and promised to promote the college. He has a penetrating, philosophical genius, and is properly a man of books. He made me a present of his Philosophia Sacra and his sermon on 'Charity and Zeal united.' I spent about two hours in learned and religious conversation with him. I found his method of examining any doctrine is, to read over the whole Bible in the original, and having extracted all the texts which refer to it, to form a judgment on the whole. I next visited Dr. Lardner, the celebrated author of 'The Credibility of the Gospel History;' and I was really surprised at the sight of him, as he differed so much from the ideas I had formed of so great a man. He is a little, pert old gentleman, full of sprightly conversation, but so deaf that he seems to hear nothing at all. I was obliged to tell him my mind

and answer his questions in writing; and he keeps a pen and paper always on the table for that purpose. He treated me very kindly, and constrained me to dine with him. I next visited Dr. Grosvenor, a venerable, humble, and affectionate old gentleman, who, under the infirmities of old age, has declined the exercise of his ministry for two or three years. I have hardly seen a man who discovered so much tenderness and humility in his very aspect. He offered me Baxter's on Williams's works; but I told him I could receive them only for the use of the college, and in that view they would be very acceptable. He therefore insisted that I would accept two pieces for my own private use, viz. *The Mourner*, and *An Essay on Health*.

"*Sunday, Jan. 29th.*—Preached for Mr. Price in Berry Street; and when I entered the pulpit, it filled me with reverence to reflect that I stood in the place where Mr. Clerkson, Dr. Owen, Dr. Watts, &c. had once officiated. My subject was Jer. xxxi. 18, 19, 20, and I was favored with some freedom. Blessed be God, I have not been disturbed with the fear of man, since I have been in this city.

"*Tuesday, Jan. 29th. Evening.*—Went to

the Amsterdam Coffee House, where independent ministers meet for friendly conversation, and to consult about the affairs of the churches; for they have no other associations, as the Presbyterians have no other Presbyteries. Indeed there seems to be no government exercised jointly among them. The English Presbyterians have no elders, no judicatures of any kind, and seem to me to agree in very few particulars with the church of Scotland.

"*Wednesday, Jan. 30th.*—We waited upon Dr. Gill, the celebrated Baptist minister. He is a serious, grave little man, and looks young and hearty, though I suppose near sixty. He signed our petition, though he modestly pleaded that his name would be of little service, and that the Baptists in general were unhappily ignorant of the importance of learning.

"*February 16th.*—I hardly think there has been one in London these many years, who has contracted so extensive an acquaintance with the ministers of this city as I have done, in less than two months. I am sometimes low spirited and bashful, especially in company with my seniors, that I cannot behave so as to recommend myself. However, I hope to settle such

a correspondence as may be for my future advantage.—I long to be at home in my study and with my family; for the character of a recluse student suits me much better than that of a man of business. But it is the providence of God that called me to this instance of self-denial, and I must submit; nay, I would cheerfully acquiesce in it.—Though I take but too superficial notice of it, yet alas I feel sin still strong in me;

Cælum non animum mutant, qui trans mare currunt.

"*Monday, Feb. 25th.*—Went to Hackney, but were disappointed of waiting on sundry we intended. Went thence to Newington, and visited Mrs. Abney, daughter of the late Sir Thomas Abney, a courteous, humble lady. The steward showed me Dr. Watts's study, and some of his manuscripts. I find he wrote but little of his sermons. As his books were taken away, there was nothing pleased me so much as the pictures of sundry great men, ranged in the order the Doctor left them. There were two vacancies, in one of which is written with the Doctor's own hand,

Est locus pluribis umbris. Hor.

And in the other,

Quis me Doctorum propria dignabitur umbra.

"This is the place the Doctor so tenderly describes in his elegy upon Gunston. I saw the turret, and the venerable oaks, and elms, &c.

"*Tuesday, Feb. 26th.*—Staid at home in the morning, preparing to preach a charity sermon to-morrow; the prospect of which is very terrifying to me. Went P. M. to the house of Lords with the Rev. Mr. Thompson, and was introduced by a Mr. George Baskerville, a lawyer, whose company I enjoyed on the way, and in the evening. He is the most facetious mortal I ever conversed with; and sometimes he gives such a loose to his wit, that one would think he has no respect to anything sacred; and yet he gave five guineas to the college, and talked at times very pertinently on divine subjects. The house of Lords is but an ordinary old building; but the assembly is the most brilliant and august that one can conceive. It was opened by a prayer read by the youngest bishop, at which all but members were ordered to go out; but Mr. Thompson and I were conveniently concealed behind a curtain, and were not excluded. The

bishops made an odd appearance to me in their dress of black and white. The judges were to give their opinions and the reasons *seriatim*, upon a case relating to the insurance of a privateer, whose company had mutinied. Five of them spoke, each near an hour. I was charmed with their clear reasoning; and one or two of them had a handsome address.

"*Wednesday, Feb. 27th.*—Preached a charity sermon at Mr. King's meeting-house, on 'I will be their God, and they shall be my people.' There was a large auditory, and a considerable number of ministers, viz. Dr. Guise, Mr. King, Mr. Gibbons, Mr. Guise, Mr. Hickman, Mr. Brine, &c. I have hardly ever preached with greater disadvantage; partly by reason of a fright occasioned by searching my pockets some time before I could find my notes, and partly from my great hurry; for I found after I had consented to preach, that the committee that have the management of the secular affairs of the dissenters were to meet on the same day; and Mr. Mauduit wrote me to get Mr. Tennent to preach for me, (which he would by no means do,) or conclude exactly at 12 o'clock. These things cast me into a perturbation of mind; and

yet I had as much freedom and tenderness as I have had in this city; for which I desire to be humbly thankful. The ministers thanked me heartily for my sermon, and seemed well pleased with it.

"Immediately after sermon, I took coach and went to Pinners's Hall to wait on the committee. They had been consulting the Virginia laws, and reading the papers I had sent them; and they told me that they were all heartily engaged in my interest, but after the best deliberation, they were apprehensive that the act of toleration was not so adopted as to become a proper law of Virginia; but only one paragraph was received, which exempts dissenters from penalty for absenting themselves from the established church. This surprised me, as I still think my reasons for my former opinions are unanswerable. They at least advised me to get a petition drawn up to the king and council, and subscribed by the dissenters in the frontier counties, which they apprehended would be of more weight than one from Hanover, because they were educated dissenters, and were a good barrier against the French and Indians. They appointed some of their members to assist me in drawing up the petition; and I intend to wait

on them as soon as possible for that end. May the providence of God smile on the attempt!

"*Monday, March 4th.*—Had but little heart for business.—Visited Mr. Waugh, the bookseller. Spent the evening at Mr. Mauduit's in conversation on the case of the dissenters in Virginia. I find Peyton Randolph, Esq. my old adversary, is now in London, and will no doubt oppose whatever is done in favor of the dissenters in Hanover.

"*Wednesday, March 6th.*—Waited in the evening on Mr. Blackwell, whom, through mistake, I took to be a dissenter, but found to be a churchman, and one of the contributors to the society for propagating Christianity in foreign parts. He made as wide a mistake, and took me for a Moravian, till I undeceived him. He appeared a very candid gentleman, and took the affair under consideration.

"*Saturday, March 16th.*—Last Sunday I preached A. M. for Mr. Gibbons on these words, 'So then neither is he that planteth anything,' &c., and as I was deeply sensible of the withdrawings of Divine influences, and the inefficaciousness of the means of grace without them, my tender passions were frequently moved through-

out the sermon, and in the conclusion burst out into a flood of tears. Sundry of the hearers were tenderly affected, particularly Mr. Cromwell, great grandson of the famous Oliver, who gave Mr. Gibbons three guineas for the college after sermon, and thanked me for my discourse, with tears in his eyes. He afterwards conducted me to Dr. Stennet's, and talked freely and warmly of experimental religion.

"Heard Mr. Read last Tuesday at Salter's Hall, on these words, 'Enter not into judgment with thy servant,' &c. But there was such a legal spirit diffused through the sermon, that I thought it rather calculated to promote the security than the conversion of sinners. I could not help thinking of a pun I have heard of a minister, who preached a sermon upon these words, 'Salt is good, but if the salt has lost its savor,' &c.; and when he was desired to publish it, he said he believed he would, and dedicate it to the preachers at *Salter's* Hall: for they wanted *seasoning*.

"Yesterday I drew up a petition for the dissenters in Virginia, and carried it to Dr. Avery to correct. The death of Mr. Pelham, [Prime Minister—he died a few weeks preceding that

date,] the project of sending a bishop over to America, the confusions between the governor and assembly in Virginia, and Mr. Randolph, my old adversary, being now in London, are all great obstructions, at present, to the relief of my distressed people. And the Committee, on these accounts, think this a very improper time to make any applications in their favor. As Dr. Stennet has a great deal of influence in court, I gave him, last night, a particular account of the rise and progress of the dissenting interest in Virgina, and the restraints and embarrassments the people labored under from the government. He was very much moved with the account, and promised me his utmost influence in their favor.

"*Tuesday, March 19th.*—Went to the Amsterdam Coffee House among the Baptist and Independent ministers, where I enjoy most satisfaction. Received the thanks of the governors of the charity-school of Bartholomew-close, for my sermon there, which were presented to me in a very respectful manner by Dr. Guise as their deputy. Though it be hard to repress the workings of vanity, even in a creature so unworthy as I, under so much applause; yet I think my

heart rises in sincere gratitude to God for advancing me from a mean family, and utter obscurity, into some importance in the world, and giving me so many advantages of public usefulness. Indeed, I hardly think there is a greater instance of this in the present age. Alas! that I do not better improve my opportunities.

"Went to Hamlin's Coffee House among the Presbyterians, where they were generally shy and unsociable towards me. They have universally, as far as I can learn, rejected all tests of orthodoxy, and require their candidates at their ordination only to declare their belief in the Scriptures. Mr. Prior, with the appearance of great uneasiness, told me that he heard we would admit none into the ministry without subscribing the Westminster Confession, and that this report would hinder all our success among the friends of liberty. I replied, that we allowed the candidate to mention his objections against any article in the Confession, and the judicature judged whether the articles objected against were essential to Christianity; and if they judged they were not, they would admit the candidate, notwithstanding his objections. He seemed to think that we were such rigid Calvinists, that

we would not admit an Arminian to communion, &c. I proposed to converse with him another time for his satisfaction.——Alas! for the laxness that prevails here among Presbyterians.—Quantum Omutate!

"*April 7th*, 1754.—We have had most surprising success in our mission, which, notwithstanding the languor of my nature, I cannot review without passionate emotions. From the best information of our friends, and our own observation upon our arrival here, we could not raise our hopes above 300 pounds; but we have already got 1200 pounds. Our friends in America cannot hear the news with the same surprise, as they do not know the difficulties we have had to encounter; but to me it appears the most signal interposition of Providence I ever saw."

Shortly after this, the journal from which these fragments are taken, closes. Davies went from England to Scotland, where he was well received, and met with considerable success. Precisely at what time he returned to America, we are not informed. Early in the year 1755 he was among his people in Hanover, laboring with his accustomed zeal and fidelity.

The year 1755 is memorable in the annals of this country. A war then raged on our western frontier. Frequent inroads were made by the French and Indians, and the new settlements were desolated, and the inhabitants butchered by a savage foe. A well appointed little army was routed, and the gallant but imprudent General Braddock, killed. The incursions of the enemy were extended to the east of the Blue Ridge. Consternation and dismay spread through the country. Besides, a drought of alarming severity prevailed, and threatened to annihilate the hopes of the husbandman. We have conversed with aged people, who remembered well the various events of the time, and in very strong terms described the fears and despondency that then got hold on the people. The alarms and privations of war for several succeeding years agitated and distressed the colonists. In this situation of affairs, Davies took a most lively interest in the concerns of the country, and preached a number of appropriate sermons, which show him to have been a most zealous patriot, as well as a man of fervent piety.

The provincial government, alarmed by the threatening aspect of affairs, appointed the 5th of

March, 1755, to be observed as a day of fasting and prayer. On this occasion Davies preached in Hanover, on Dan. iv. 25. "The Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will." *. We do not think it necessary to give an analysis of these sermons, but the mention of the occasion on which they were preached may give them a new interest in the minds of many readers.

It was on the 10th of July, 1755, that Braddock sustained his signal defeat. This was the period of highest alarm in the country. On the 20th of the month, Davies preached a sermon, "On the Defeat of General Braddock going to Fort Du Quesne." There are various passages in this sermon which very strongly imply, that at that period there was much talk of abandoning the country to the French and Indians. We offer the following extract in support of this remark.

"Christians should be patriots. What is that religion good for, that leaves men cowards upon the appearance of danger? And permit me to

* See vol. 3, page 213, 8vo. edition of Davies's Sermons.

say, that I am particularly solicitous that you, my brethren of the dissenters, should act with honor and spirit in this juncture, as it becomes loyal subjects, lovers of your country, and courageous Christians. That is a mean, sordid, cowardly soul, that would abandon his country, and shift for his own little self, when there is any probability of defending it. To give the greater weight to what I say, I may take the liberty to tell you I have as little personal interest—as little to lose, in this colony, as most of you. If I consulted either my safety or my temporal interest, I should soon remove with my family to Great Britain, or the northern colonies, where I have had very inviting offers. Nature has not formed me for a military life, nor furnished me with a great degree of fortitude and courage; and yet I must declare, that after the most calm and impartial deliberation, I am determined not to leave my country, while there is any prospect of defending it. But, should the case appear desperate, I would advise every man to shift for himself; and I would rather fly to the utmost end of the earth, than to submit to French tyranny and Popish superstition. Certainly, he does not deserve a place in any country, who is

ready to run from it at every appearance of danger. Let us then, my brethren, show ourselves men, Britons, and Christians, on this trying occasion. What! shall we resign so extensive and flourishing a country—a land of plenty, and liberty—shall we tamely surrender it to a parcel of perfidious French, and savage Indians? Shall slavery here clank her chain, or tyranny rage with lawless fury? Shall the house of God be turned into a temple of idols? No, Sirs; let us make a noble stand for the blessings we enjoy."

It has been before remarked, that Davies paid particular attention to the instruction of the negroes; and ministered to a large number of black communicants. It was feared that the blacks would rise up and join the Indians and French. Davies used his influence among them, and the instruction he had afforded, to deter them from any such purpose. Among other things, he told them that, should they fall into the hands of the French, they must pray in Latin, and give up their Bibles; must worship images and pictures; must pray to men and women; must believe that the bread in the sacrament is the real body, and the wine the real

blood of Christ. This is mentioned here for the purpose of showing what hold religious instruction gives on the minds of slaves, and how a right course of discipline promotes the security of masters.*

In August of the same year, Davies delivered a sermon in Hanover, to Capt. Overton's company of independent volunteers, which has been published under the title, "Religion and Patriotism the Constituents of a good Soldier." In a note appended to this discourse, he makes a conjecture concerning Washington, which shows his sagacious observation of the characters of men, and the intimations of divine Providence. Washington was only twenty-three years old, when he, by his courage and good conduct, preserved the remnant of Braddock's army from ruin. In the sermon just referred to, Davies expresses a hope that "God had been pleased to diffuse some sparks of martial fire through our country;" and appeals to the company of volunteers he then addressed, as a proof of the fact. To this he annexes the following note:— "As a remarkable instance of this, I may point

* See Davies's Sermons, vol. 3. page 210.

out to the public that heroic youth, Col. Washington, whom I cannot but hope Providence has hitherto preserved in so signal a manner, FOR SOME IMPORTANT SERVICE TO HIS COUNTRY." It is entirely unnecessary for us to remark on the ample verification afforded to this conjecture, in the history of our own country. He, whose youthful promise excited this hope in the patriotic preacher, was afterwards, "First, in war; first, in peace; and first in the hearts of his countrymen." His name now sheds a lustre on his country, and his example is recorded for the instruction of future generations.

In that volume of sermons to which we have before referred, there are ten or twelve occasional discourses, which, connected with the history of the time, serve to show the ardent patriotism of the preacher, his high toned public spirit, his love of liberty, and his firm reliance on that providence of God which is over all his works. We have conversed with aged friends, who remember well these times, and the despondency and consternation which then pervaded the colony. They were themselves at the meetings of the people, when Davies preached these sermons; and they represent

in lively terms, the dejection and gloom depicted on every countenance, when every murmur of the western breeze seemed to be associated with the war-whoop of the savage, and the wail of the victims of French and Indian cruelty. And they say that, as the preacher poured forth the strains of his eloquence, his own spirit was transfused into his hearers, the cheek that was blenched with fear reddened, and the drooping eye kindled with martial fires, and at the conclusion, every voice was prepared to say, "Let us march against the enemy! Let us conquer or die!" Particularly, we have been told by eye-witnesses that the effect of the following passage was most powerful:—"May I not reasonably insist upon it, that the company be made up this very day, before we leave this place?* Methinks your king, your country, nay your own interest command me; and therefore I insist upon it. Oh! for the all-prevailing force of Demosthenes' oratory—but I recal my wish, that I may correct it;—Oh! for the influence

*Note annexed to this sermon. "Preached to the militia of Hanover county in Virginia, at a general muster, May 8, 1759, with a view to raise a company for Capt. Samuel Meridith."

of the Lord of armies, the God of battles, the Author of true courage and every heroic virtue, to fire you into patriots and soldiers this moment!—Ye young and hardy men, whose very faces seem to speak that God and nature formed you for soldiers, who are free from the incumbrance of families depending on you for subsistence, and who are perhaps but of little service to society while at home, may I not speak for you, and declare as your mouth, 'Here we are all ready to abandon our ease, and rush into the glorious dangers of the field, in defence of our country?' Ye that love your country, enlist; for honor will follow you in life or death, in such a cause. You, that love your religion, enlist; for your religion is in danger. Can Protestant Christianity expect quarters from heathen savages, and French papists? Sure, in such an alliance the powers of Hell make a third party. Ye that love your friends and relations, enlist; lest ye see them enslaved and butchered before your eyes."

After the close of the discourse, we have been informed that a company was made up for Capt. Meridith in a few minutes; and that many more

offered their names than the Captain was authorized by law to command. Davies repaired from the muster ground to the tavern, to order his horse; and the whole regiment followed him, and pressed round him, to catch every word that dropt from his lips. On observing their desire, he stood in the tavern porch, and again addressed them, until he was exhausted with speaking.

It has been conjectured that it was the eloquence of Davies, and the power of his genius, that roused the mighty spirit of Patrick Henry, and elicited the latent energies of his mind. We stop here to offer something in support of this conjecture. Henry was born in Hanover, in May, 1736. Davies went to that county in 1747, when Henry was eleven years old; and remained there until 1759, that is about twelve years. The patriotic sermons to which we have referred, were delivered in 1755–6–7–8, when Henry was from 19 to 22 years of age. From the time, then, of Henry's eleventh to his twenty-second year, he was in the neighborhood of a man whose genius and eloquence excited admiration wherever he went, and often produced effects as powerful as those ascribed to

the orations of Demosthenes himself. Now, when we consider the influence which a master spirit exerts on every kindred mind that comes within its sphere, and recollect the terms of enthusiasm in which Henry was accustomed to speak of Davies, we cannot but regard the conjecture as in the highest degree probable. It was Davies, we believe, that kindled Henry's mind, and afforded the model on which he formed his elocution.

While the political state of the country thus occupied the mind of Davies, he did not, for a moment, lose sight of the interests of religion. He may be regarded as the founder of the Presbytery of Hanover, and the prompter and leader in every work of zeal and love carried on at this time by dissenters.

The limits of the Presbytery of Hanover, originally comprehended the whole of Virginia, and a considerable part, if not the whole, of North Carolina. Through this vast territory there were scattered numerous settlements of Protestant dissenters, besides many who had originally belonged to the established church, but had chosen to leave it, and join the dissenters. It was a vast charge to be committed to

six ministers of the gospel, the number originally constituting the Presbytery. Yet no part of it seems to have been neglected by them. There was an activity and zeal, which multiplied their labors and increased their energies in an astonishing degree. Davies seemed almost to have been endowed with the attribute of pluripresence. He made his influence to be felt every where; he transfused his own spirit into the bosom of his associates, and roused them by the force of his example. The Presbytery met, generally, at least four times a year; and from one meeting to another, a committee was appointed to attend to any business that might occur. Every movement gave tokens of a zeal that nothing could damp, of a perseverance that nothing could exhaust. An apostolical spirit animated these faithful men. The ground then occupied by them, is now committed for cultivation to two synods, which contain about ninety ministers. This is a considerable increase; but had the mantle of Elijah rested on succeeding prophets; had the spirit of Davies stirred within those who followed him; our Zion would not now present so many waste places, would not

exhibit so many scenes of desolation and spiritual death.

Davies was every where a zealous asserter of religious liberty. Before the general court, he boldly maintained that the Act of Toleration extended to the colony of Virginia, and claimed the same privileges for dissenters here, that were granted to them in the mother country. This claim was resisted by the leading men in the colony; and when Davies went to England, he had the subject agitated there. In his journal, under date of April 7, 1754, he says, "I have sent a petition to Virginia, at the direction of the committee, to be subscribed by the dissenters there, and transmitted to be presented to the King in Council." And in the year 1756, when the Earl of London came over to this country, an address on behalf of the Presbytery was presented to him, in which they express the hope that, "Whereas we have, in times past, lain under some restraints, from which our brethren in England, under the same religious establishment, are happily exempted, your Excellency the Governor will grant us all the liberties and immunities of a full toleration, according to the laws of England, and particularly, according

to an act of Parliament, commonly called the Act of Toleration."

And in the year 1758, on the arrival of Governor Fauquier, a similar address was presented to him, from which we make the following extract:—"The Presbytery, Sir, have nothing to request for themselves, but that your honor would secure and continue to them the peaceable and unmolested enjoyment of the liberties and immunities of the Act of Toleration, as understood in England, while they comply with its requisitions, and conduct themselves as dutiful subjects."

This address was presented to the Governor by Davies and Wright, and he returned the following answer:—

"*Gentlemen*,—I am extremely obliged to the Presbytery for their kind and affectionate address.

"Nothing can give me more pleasure, than the assurances of their endeavors to promote a proper spirit in the people to defend their liberties at this critical juncture.

"The Presbytery may be assured that I shall always exert myself to support the Act of Toler-

ation, and secure the peaceable enjoyment of its immunities to all his majesty's subjects who conform thereto."

Besides this, Davies, by bringing the subject before the King and Council, received from the Attorney General a declaration, under authority, that the provisions of the act above mentioned did extend to the colony of Virginia.

The slight sketch which we have given of this subject authorizes the belief that it is owing to the exertions made by Davies, and the public discussions on this subject in which a man of his powers engaged, that sentiments so just and liberal respecting religious liberty have pervaded the population of Virginia. It was his intelligence, his vigor, his courage, that gave the impulse, and directed the public sentiment into the channel in which it now flows. The work begun by him, was indeed pursued by others, and at length brought to a happy consummation. Now, there is but one mind among all denominations, and they rejoice in that liberty wherewith they have been made free.

The popularity of Davies, in Virginia, was almost unbounded. He was invited and urged to preach in almost all parts of the State, as

then settled. And the Presbytery, willing to gratify the wishes of the people as far as possible, at every session directed Mr. Davies to supply a number of vacancies. Indeed this was carried so far, that Davies's congregation in Hanover remonstrated to the Presbytery against the measure, and insisted that he should not be appointed to supply vacancies, unless "his congregation should be provided for in his absence." How this case was decided we know not. Yet it seems clear to us, that the congregation had the right of the question. Where a church engage a man as their pastor, and *support* him, that they may enjoy the benefit of his labors, they have a right to the whole of his time. Of course, no ecclesiastical body is authorized to require of him offices incompatible with his engagements. At the same time, when a people is blessed with an able and faithful minister, and their brethren are perishing around them for lack of knowledge, it is a part of Christian charity sometimes to allow their pastor to go among them, and dispense the bread of life; or to engage in any other labors, which, while they do not impoverish them, enrich others in the gifts of heavenly mercy.

It is not possible to read the sermons of Da-

vies, without perceiving that he was a man of considerable literary attainments. At the age of twenty-three, as we have seen, he began his career of active service, and died in his thirty-seventh year; yet he seemed to be very conversant with the learning of his age, and doubtless gave an impulse to the minds of his co-presbyters, and of the students of Divinity raised up under the care of the Hanover Presbytery. In the oldest records of this body, we read of candidates for the ministry being examined on "Latin, Greek, and Hebrew; on Ontology, Pneumatics, and Astronomy," as well as on the various branches of Theological learning. This doubtless had its effect on the successors of these men. Accordingly we find that they have uniformly stood among the foremost in the country in intellectual attainments.

In the year 1759, Davies removed from the county of Hanover to Princeton, for the purpose of entering into the office of President of the College of New Jersey, to which he had been unanimously elected. A full account of this matter is given in the Farewell sermon, preached in Hanover, July, 1759. We beg leave to

make the following extract. The text is 2 Cor. xiii. 11. *Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, &c.*

"Farewell, especially a final *farewell* among brethren is a melancholy word, the language of bereaved love. And little did I once think I should ever have occasion to pronounce this doleful sound in the ears of my dear congregation in Hanover, with whom I fully expected to live and die. Both my first settlement here and my final removal were altogether unexpected. A few weeks before I made my first visit to Hanover, I had no more thoughts of it as my pastoral charge, than of the remotest corner of the world; but was preparing to settle in ease near my native place,* till the more urgent necessity and importunity of the people here, constrained me to alter my resolution. It is known to no mortal but myself with what reluctance, fear, and trembling, I accepted your call. The rawness and inexperience of my youth, and the formidable opposition then made both by church and state, when a dissenter was stared at with horror, as a shocking and portentous phenome-

* *St. George's* in Pennsylvania.

non, were no small discouragements in my way. For some years, I durst hardly venture to appear but in the pulpit, or in my study; lest by a promiscuous conversation with the world at large, I should injure the cause of religion, by some instance of unguarded conduct.

"But when, after many an anxious conflict, I accepted your call, I fully expected I was settled among you for life. I did not foresee, nor seek for, or even desire an occasion to remove, notwithstanding the various difficulties attending my situation; and whatever advantageous offers have been made to me, on either side the Atlantic, have not had the force of temptations. It was in my heart to live and die with you; and such of you as best know my circumstances, and how little I shall carry from Virginia, after eleven years' labor in it, must be convinced in your own conscience, and can assure others, that worldly interest was not the reason of my attachment.

"To satisfy you of the reasons of my present removal, I will give you a brief impartial account of the whole affair:

"The college of New Jersey, though an infant institution, is of the utmost importance to the

interests of religion and learning in several extensive and populous colonies. From it, both church and state expect to be supplied with persons properly qualified for public stations; and it has already been very useful to both in this respect. Before the irreparable breach made in it, by the death of that excellent man, president Burr, its members were increased to near an hundred; and there was no small prospect of considerable additions every year. But alas! president Burr, its father, is no more. Upon his removal, the trustees made choice of the Rev. Mr. Edwards to succeed him, *the profoundest reasoner*, and *the greatest divine*, in my opinion, *that America ever produced*. His advancement to the place gave the public sanguine expectations of the future fame and prosperity of the college. But alas! how short is human foresight! how uncertain and blind are the highest expectations of mortals! He was seated in the president's chair but a few days, when he was taken sick and died, and left a bereaved society to lament his loss, and pine away under it. An earthquake spread a tremor through a great part of our solid continent on the melan-

choly day on which he died;* how much more did Nassau Hall tremble, when this pillar fell! Some of the trustees, to my great surprise, had some thoughts of me, upon the first vacancy that happened. But knowing the difficulty of my removal, and being very unwilling to bereave my congregation, they made an attempt, upon president Edward's death, to furnish the college with another; and therefore chose the Rev. Mr. Lockwood, a gentleman of a worthy character in New England. But being disappointed as to him, they elected me on the 16th of August, and were at the trouble and expense of sending two messengers to solicit the affair with me and the Presbytery. I can honestly say, never anything cast me into such anxious perplexities. Never did I feel myself so much in need of Divine direction, and so destitute of it. My difficulty was, not to find out my own inclination, which was pre-engaged to Hanover, but the path of duty; and the fear of mistaking it, in so important a turn of life, kept me uneasy night and day. I submitted the matter to the Presbytery, and gave them an honest representation of it, as far as it

* March 22, 1758.

was known to me. As I was at an entire loss in my own mind to discover my duty, I could not, upon the authority of my own judgment, approve or reject their decision; but I cheerfully acquiesced in it, and sent it, with my own negative answer, to the board of trustees, and expected never to hear any more about it. But the trustees, to my still greater surprise, made a second application, requesting I would act as vice president during the winter, till the synod should sit, when the judgment of the Presbytery might be referred to that higher judicature. After making all the inquiries in my power to discover what was my duty in so perplexing a case, I thought I had certainly found out the will of God, and returned an absolute refusal in the strongest terms; transferring all my interest at the board to another gentleman,* whom I looked upon as incomparably better qualified for the place, and of whose election I then had considerable hopes. Upon this, I was as much settled in Hanover, in my own mind, as ever; and, as many of you may remember, publicly congratulated you upon the pleasing prospect.

* Dr. Samuel Finley.

But how was I surprised and struck into a consternation, to receive a third application in more importunate terms than ever! This again unsettled my mind, and renewed my perplexities; though I was encouraged to hope, that when I had so sincerely committed my way unto the Lord, he would direct my path, and order things so, as that the result should discover my duty. This third application, as I informed the trustees in my answer, constrained me only to admit a *mere possibility* of its being my duty to comply; but my mind was still almost established in the contrary persuasion. It constrained me only to lay myself open to conviction, and no longer shut up the avenues of light; and therefore I came to this conclusion—To mention, at large, all my difficulties and objections—to insist that my first election should be null, because the electors were not then apprised of my objections—and to leave it to the trustees, after hearing all that could be said against it, whether to re-elect me at their next meeting. But even this was not all. I farther insisted, that in case they should re-elect me, it should be referred to the synod of New York and Philadelphia, whether I should accept the place

This is a brief view of my proceedings in the affair; and for further intelligence, I must refer you to my friends, the elders of this congregation, to whom I have communicated all the letters I have received or written, that they may be able to satisfy you. And I can assure you in their presence, that all of them that heard my answer, expressed their acquiescence in it. The result of the affair, when left upon this footing, has been, that I was re-chosen at the board of trustees, by a much greater majority than at first; and that the synod, consisting of an unusual number of ministers from various parts, after hearing at large what could be said upon both sides, not only consented to my acceptance of the proposal, but even dissolved my pastoral relation to my dear charge, and ordered my removal by almost a unanimous vote. This has brought the tedious, anxious affair to a final issue, and disarms all my resistance, so that I can struggle no longer. It was one of my vows, on the solemn day of my ordination, that I would be subject to my brethren in the Lord, in all things lawful. It is therefore very impertinent to object, that 'I might stay, after all, if I would.' It is true, it is in my power to refuse

to comply with my duty, even when it appears: it is in my power to violate my solemn vows, and incur the guilt of perjury by disobedience to my brethren, in that judicature to which I belong: that is, it is in my power, as a free agent, to sin. But this is a preposterous power, which I hope God will enable me never willingly to exercise. O that his grace may always happily disable me from disobeying the call of duty."

We have thus seen, in Davies's own words, an account of the reasons of his removal from Virginia to New Jersey. The college over which he was called to preside, has always been regarded as an important institution. The fathers of the Presbyterian Church in America, considered the interests of vital religion and sound learning, as intimately connected. And under this conviction, they made exertions, and sacrifices, which may well put their sons to shame. It was their zeal and public spirit that established those seminaries, in which have been trained up so many men, in every department of life, to serve their country. It is owing to them, that there is a zeal for improvement among the clergy, and a good degree of infor-

mation among the people. Princeton at that day had, as at present it has, high claims to the public favor; and no man could have been selected better calculated to sustain these claims, and commend the institution to the support of the people, than Davies.

The period of his presidency was equally auspicious to the college, and honorable to himself. It was here that he gave the crowning evidence of the vigor and versatility of his genius. His previous situation had afforded little leisure, and comparatively few means for the cultivation of general science. He came likewise to the college, at a time when its literary state and reputation had been much improved by the great and acknowledged abilities of President Burr. It was natural, therefore, that even his friends should have some doubts of his complete preparation to fill and adorn so exalted a sphere. But it soon appeared that the force and activity of his mind had supplied every defect, and surmounted every obstacle. His official duties were discharged, from the first, with an ability which surmounted every fear, and realized the brightest hopes.

The ample opportunities and demands which

he found for the exercise of his talents, gave a new spring to his diligence. While his active labors were multiplied and arduous, his application to study was unusually intense. His exertions through the day seemed rather to dispose him for reading, than rest, by night. Though he rose by break of day, he seldom retired till twelve o'clock, or a later hour. His success was proportionate. By the united efforts of his talents and industry, he left the college at his death, in as high a state of literary excellence, as it had ever known since its institution. The few innovations which he introduced into the academical exercises and plans of study, were confessedly improvements. He was particularly happy in inspiring his pupils with a taste for composition and oratory, in which he himself so much excelled.

His unremitted application to study and to the duties of his office, probably precipitated his death. The habit of his body being plethoric, his health had, for some years, greatly depended on the exercise of riding, to which he was, from necessity, much habituated in Virginia. This salutary employment had been, from the time he took the college, almost entirely relinquished.

Toward the close of January, 1761, he was seized with a bad cold, for which he was bled. The same day, he transcribed for the press his sermon on the death of king George the second. The day following, he preached twice in the college hall. The arm in which he had been bled, became, in consequence, much inflamed, and his former indisposition increased. On the morning of Monday, he was seized, while at breakfast, with violent chills. An inflammatory fever followed, which, in ten days put a period to his important life.

What we call *premonitions* of death are, generally rather the fictions of a gloomy or misguided imagination, than realities. Yet the following anecdote contains so singular a concurrence of circumstances, as gives it a claim to be recorded.

A few days before the beginning of the year in which Mr. Davies died, an intimate friend told him that a sermon would be expected from him on new-year's day; adding, among other things, that President Burr, on the first day of the year in which he died, preached a sermon on Jer. xxviii. 16. *Thus saith the Lord, This year thou shalt die;* and that after his death, the people remarked that it was premoni-

tory. Mr. Davies replied, that "although it ought not to be viewed in that light, yet it was very remarkable." When new-year's day came, he preached; and to the surprise of the congregation, from the same text. Being seized about three weeks afterwards, he soon adverted to the circumstance, and remarked, that he had been undesignedly led to preach, as it were, his own funeral sermon.

It is to be regretted that the violence of his disorder deprived him of the exercise of reason, through most of his sickness. Had it been otherwise, his friends and the public would doubtless have been gratified with an additional evidence of the transcendent excellence of the Christian religion, and of its power to support the soul in the prospect and approach of death. But he had preached still more emphatically by his life; and even in his delirium, he clearly manifested what were the favorite objects of his concern. His bewildered mind was continually imagining, and his faltering tongue uttering, some expedient to promote the prosperity of Christ's church, and the good of mankind.

His premature exit (he was but little more than thirty-six) was generally and justly lament-

ed as a loss almost irreparable, not only to a distressed family and a bereaved college, but to the ministry, the church, the community, the republic of letters, and in short, to all the most valuable interests of mankind. An affectionate tribute was paid to his character and virtues by Dr. Finley, his successor, in a sermon preached on the occasion of his death, from Rom. xiv. 7, 8. *For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; or whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.*

Having detailed the leading incidents of the life of Mr. Davies, we will pause and contemplate some of the prominent and most interesting features of his mind and heart.

The Father of spirits had endued him with the richest intellectual gifts; a vigorous understanding, a glowing imagination, a fertile invention, united with a correct judgment and a retentive memory. None who read his works, can doubt that he possessed a portion of *original genius*, which falls to the lot of few. He was born for great undertakings. He was destined to excel in whatever he undertook. "The

unavoidable consciousness of native power," says Dr. Finley, "made him bold and enterprising. Yet the event proved that his boldness arose, not from a partial, groundless self-conceit, but from true self-knowledge. Upon fair and candid trial, faithful and just to himself, he judged what he could do; what he could, when called to it, he attempted; and what he attempted, he accomplished."

How pleasing to contemplate a mind of such elevation and energy, divested of the pride of talents and of science, moulded into the temper of the gospel, and consecrating all its powers and exertions to the promotion of religion! "I desire," says he, in a letter to his intimate friend, Dr. Gibbons, "seriously to devote to God, and to my country, all the labors of my head, my heart, my hand, and pen; and if he pleases to bless any of them, I hope I shall be thankful, and wonder at his condescending grace. O, my dear brother! could we spend and be spent all our lives in painful, disinterested, indefatigable service for God and the world, how serene and bright would it render the swift approaching eve of life! I am laboring to do a little to save my country, and, which is of much more consequence, to save souls from

death, from that tremendous kind of death, which a *soul* can die. I have but little success of late; but, blessed be God, it surpasses my expectation, and much more my desert. Some of my brethren labor to better purpose. The pleasure of the Lord prospers in their hands."

Mr. Davies' religion was, in principle and spirit, purely and eminently *evangelical.* It brought him to the foot of the cross, to receive salvation as a free gift. It penetrated his soul with the profoundest reverence for a pardoning God, and the tenderest gratitude to a dying Saviour. It engaged him in an ardent and vigorous pursuit of universal holiness; while, at the same time, it rendered him humble and dissatisfied with himself, amid his highest attainments. These traits of character are strongly illustrated by some passages in a letter to a friend above-mentioned, to whom he was accustomed to disclose the inmost recesses of his heart. Having spoken of a violent sickness, from which he was just recovering, he proceeds in this style: "Blessed be my master's name, this disorder found me employed in his service. It seized me in the pulpit, like a soldier wounded in the field. This has been a busy summer with me.

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In about two months, I rode about five hundred miles, and preached about forty sermons. This affords me some pleasure in the review. But alas! the mixture of sin, and of many nameless imperfections, that run through, and corrupt all my services, give me shame, sorrow and mortification. My fever made unusual ravages upon my understanding, and rendered me frequently delirious, and always stupid. But when I had any little sense of things, I generally felt pretty calm and serene; and death, that mighty terror, was disarmed. Indeed, the thought of leaving my dear family destitute, and my flock shepherdless, made me often start back, and cling to life; but in other respects, death appeared a kind of indifferency to me. Formerly, I have wished to live longer, that I might be better prepared for heaven; but this consideration had but very little weight with me, and that for a very unusual reason, which was this: After long trial, I found this world a place so unfriendly to the growth of every thing *divine* and *heavenly*, that I was afraid, if I should live longer, I should be no better fitted for heaven, than I am. Indeed, I have hardly any hopes of ever making any great attainments in holiness

while in this world, though I should be doomed to stay in it as long as Methuselah. I see other Christians, indeed, around me, make some progress, though they go on with but a snail like motion. But when I consider that I set out about twelve years old, and what sanguine hopes I then had of my future progress, and yet that I have been almost at a stand ever since, I am quite discouraged. O my good Master, if I may dare to call thee so, I am afraid I shall never serve thee much better on this side the region of perfection. The thought grieves me; it breaks my heart; but I can hardly hope better. But if I have the least spark of true piety in my breast, I shall not always labor under this complaint. No, my Lord, I shall yet serve thee; serve thee through an immortal duration; with the activity, the fervor, the perfection of 'the wrapt seraph that adores and burns.' I very much suspect this desponding view of the matter is wrong, and I do not mention it with approbation, but only relate it as an unusual reason for my willingness to die, which I never felt before, and which I could not suppress.

"In my sickness, I found the unspeakable importance of a Mediator, in a religion for sin-

ners. O! I could have given you the word of a dying man for it, that Jesus whom you preach is indeed a necessary, and an all sufficient Saviour. Indeed he is the only support for a departing soul. *None but Christ; none but Christ.* Had I as many good works as Abraham or Paul, I would not have dared build my hopes on such a quicksand, but only on this firm eternal rock.

"I am rising up, my brother, with a desire to recommend him better to my fellow sinners, than I have done. But alas! I hardly hope to accomplish it. He has done a great deal more by me already, than I ever expected, and infinitely more than I deserved. But he never intended me for great things. He has beings both of my own and of superior orders, that can perform him more worthy service. O! if I might but untie the latchet of his shoes, or draw water for the service of his sanctuary, it is enough for me. I am no angel, nor would I murmur because I am not."

Mr. Davies cultivated an intimate acquaintance with his own heart. He scrupulously brought to the test the principles and motives of his actions, and severely condemned himself for

every deviation from the perfect rule. Having been solicited to publish a volume of poems, he communicated to a friend the following ingenious remarks: "What affords me the greatest discouragement, attended with painful reflections, in such cases, is the ambitious and selfish spirit I find working in me, and intermixing itself with all my most refined and disinterested aims. Fame, for which some professedly write, is a strong, though a resisted temptation to me; and I often conclude my attempts will never be crowned with any remarkable success, till the divine glory be more sincerely my aim, and I be willing to decrease, that Jesus may increase. It is easy to reason down this vile lust of fame; but oh! it is hard to extirpate it from the heart. There is a paper in Dr. Watts's miscellaneous thoughts, on this subject, which characterizes me, in this respect, as exactly as anything I have seen; and a poem of his, entitled *Sincere Praise*, is often the language of my heart."

——"Pride, that busy sin,
Spoils all that I perform;
Curst pride, that creeps securely in,
And swells a little worm.

"The very songs I frame
Are faithless to thy cause;
And steal the honors of thy name
To build their own applause."

But though rigid in judging himself, he was exemplarily catholic in the opinions he formed of others. He entertained a high regard for many, who differed from him in various points of faith and practice. Taking a large and luminous survey of the field of religion, he accurately distinguished the comparative importance of things, and proportioned his zeal accordingly. While conscientiously tenacious on all great subjects, he was generously candid in points of minor consequence. Few, indeed, have so happily avoided the opposite extremes of bigotry and latitudinarianism. Few have exhibited so unwavering a zeal for evangelical truth, and the power of religion, yet in such uniform consistency with the sacred principles of love and meekness. His warm and liberal heart could never be confined within the narrow limits of a party. Real worth, wherever discovered, could not fail to engage his affection and esteem.

Truth he sought for its own sake, and loved for its native charms. The sentiments which he embraced, he avowed with the simplicity of a Christian, and the courage of a man. Yet keeping his mind ever open to conviction, he retracted his opinions without reluctance, when-

ever they proved to be mistakes; for he judged that the knowledge of the truth alone was real learning, and that attempting to defend an error was but laboring to be ignorant.

He possessed an ardent benevolence, which rendered him the delight of his friends, and the admiration of all who knew him. The gentleness and suavity of his disposition were remarkable. One of his friends declared, that he had never seen him angry during several years of unbounded intimacy, though he had known him to be ungenerously treated. He was as ready to forgive injuries received, as solicitous to avoid offending others. His heart overflowed with tenderness and pity to the distressed; and in his generous eagerness to supply the wants of the poor, he often excelled his ability. While thus eminent in his disposition to oblige, he was equally sensible of the kindness of others; and as he could bestow with generosity, so he could receive without servility.

His deportment in company was graceful and genteel, without ceremony. It united the grave with the pleasant, and the accomplished gentleman with the dignified and devout Christian.

He was among the brightest examples of filial piety. The virtues and example of his excellent mother made an indelible impression upon his memory and heart. While pouring blessings on her name, and humbly styling himself, a "degenerate plant," he declared, not only that her early dedication of him to God had been a strong inducement to devote himself by his own personal act, but that he looked upon the most important blessings of his life as immediate answers to her prayers. As a husband, he was kind, tender, and cordial; mingling a genuine and manly fondness with a delicate respect.

As a parent, he felt all the affectionate, trembling solicitudes, which nature and grace could inspire. "There is nothing," he writes to his friend, "that can wound a parent's heart so deeply, as the thought that he should bring up children to dishonor his God here, and be miserable hereafter. I beg your prayers for mine, and you may expect a return in the same kind." In another letter he says, "We have now three sons and two daughters, whose young minds, as they open, I am endeavoring to cultivate with my own hand, unwilling to trust them to a stranger; and I find the business of education much

more difficult than I expected. My dear little creatures sob and drop a tear now and then under my instructions, but I am not so happy as to see them under deep and lasting impressions of religion; and this is the greatest grief they afford me. Grace cannot be communicated by natural descent; and if it could, they would receive but little from me."

Few have had a higher relish for friendship, than Mr. Davies. Few have better understood its delicacies, or more faithfully and judiciously discharged its duties. These, and various other parts of his character, are agreeably unfolded in the following letter, written in the year 1751.

"*My very dear friend*,—I redeem a few nocturnal hours to breathe out my benevolent wishes for you, and to assure you of my peculiar regards. Human life is extremely precarious and uncertain; and, perhaps, at your return, I may be above the reach of your correspondence; or, perhaps, your voyage may end on the eternal shore. I, therefore, write to you, dear Sir, in the last agonies of friendship, if I may use the expression. If, upon your return, you only hear my worthless name tost from tongue to tongue,

and find this system of clay that now breathes, and moves, and writes, mouldering into its native element, you may safely indulge this reflection: 'Well, once I had a friend; a friend whose affection could find room for me in his retired importunities for mercy at the throne of grace, when his own wants were so numerous and great, that they might have engrossed all his concern.' Or if I am doomed to survive you, I shall have the melancholy satisfaction to reflect, 'My friend did not live without such assurances of my tender affection, as might engage his confidence in my useless friendship.'

"And now, when I feel the soft emotions of friendship, and speak of the final period of this mortal state, I cannot restrain myself from intermixing some of the solemnities of religion. We shall have an interview beyond the grave, though we should never converse more beneath the skies, in the low language of mortals. But, oh! on what happy, or on what dismal coast shall we meet? On the verdant plains of the celestial paradise, or in the dreary regions of horror and despair? The human mind is incapable of forming a more important inquiry; and if the hurries or amusements of this infant state of things can

banish it from our minds, we have forfeited the character of rational creatures; we are as really and more perniciously mad, than any wretch in bedlam, though we are not distinguished as such by the world, who are seized with the same delirium. The valley of the shadow of death appears frequently gloomy and tremendous to me; but, it is in those unhappy hours when my views of the glorious method of salvation through a Mediator, appear in an obscure light, and my complacence in it is wavering or languid; when the fervor of devotion is abated, and my soul is lulled asleep in a carnal security; but my mind cannot rest under this uncertainty; it is too important a matter to make an implicit venture in. Oh, Sir, an eternity of consummate happiness! An eternity of the most intolerable misery!—My mind sinks beneath the unwieldy thought, and I cannot finish the sentence! If I am mistaken in this, if I form to myself some easy scheme of religion that may suit the humor of this world well enough, but will not obtain the approbation of the supreme Judge, then my reason is a pernicious superfluity, my very being an eternal curse. *Wo is me, my mother, that thou didst bear me!* But, in those joyful hours,

when I can rest my guilty soul on an all-sufficient Redeemer with all the humble confidence of a confirmed faith; when I can read the evidences of regenerating grace upon my heart; when I can recollect the solemn transactions between God and my soul, and renew them in the most voluntary dedication of myself and all I am and have to him through the blessed Mediator; then, immortality is a glorious prospect; the grisly phantom, death, is disarmed of its horrors; and, with the inviting mildness of an angel, charms me into its cold embrace. Then the mortal pale, the dying cold, the quivering lips, the falling jaws, and all the grim attendants of the last agony, carry nothing terrible in them.

> 'Clasp'd in my heavenly Father's arms,
> I would resign my fleeting breath
> And lose my life amid the charms
> Of so divine and blest a death.'

"Dear, dear Sir, I have opened to you some of my sentiments on experimental religion, and you know we unhappily differ upon sundry points relating to it. Our differences on many other points, and sundry of them even with respect to this, have but a very remote connection with everlasting salvation; and, no doubt, multitudes

arrive in the same heaven, who are tenacious of different sides. But that thorough change of heart, usually denominated regeneration; that distressing conviction of our undone condition by sin, and utter inability to relieve ourselves by virtue of that strength common to mankind in general; that humble acceptance of Christ as our only Saviour and Lord, by a faith of divine operation; that humbling sense of the corruption of human nature, and eager pursuit and practice of universal holiness, which I have, I believe, mentioned in conversation, and in my letters, appear to me of absolute necessity.

"I should be glad if you would read the second and third of Dr. Doddridge's Sermons on Regeneration, which, I think, give a very just and rational account of that important change. I would not venture my soul on a religion short of this, for ten thousand worlds; and I am inexpressibly anxious, (pardon the perhaps needless anxiety of my love,) lest you should fatally mistake here. My anxiety is heightened, when I consider your favorite authors. Tillotson's and Sherlock's works, the Whole Duty of Man, and such authors, are truly valuable in their place, and handle many points to peculiar

advantage; but if I know anything of experimental Christianity, they treat of it very superficially, and, I think, in their most obvious sense, tend to mislead us in sundry things of great importance relating to it, not so much by asserting false doctrine, as by omitting sundry branches of it absolutely necessary. I have examined the matter with some care; and I am sure their delineation of Christianity, is not an exact copy of what I must experience before I can see the Lord. I must, indeed, come up to their account of it, but I must not rest there; there is a necessity of experiencing something farther than they generally inculcate. The same thing I would inoffensively observe with respect to all the sermons I have heard in Virginia, from the established clergy. Hence, by the bye, you may see the peculiar safety of my scheme; if their scheme of religion be sufficient, I am as safe as they, since mine includes it; but if it should prove essentially defective, then you see where the advantage lies. This difference is not at all owing to their being of the church of England, for many of that church agree with me; and many Presbyterians with them; but it is owing to their imbibing the modern divinity,

which, like a pernicious leaven, has diffused itself among all denominations; and however confidently some assert it, I could not embrace it, without wilfully throwing myself into ruin.

"You know, Sir, what use I would have you make of these hints; and I am confident you will pardon the affectionate solicitude for you, which prompts me to them. I speak solemnly, dear Sir, solemnly as in the presence of God, and not with the contradictious spirit of a disputant. Of all the systems of practical religion which has come under my examination, I have endeavored to choose the most sure, as the foundation of my hopes; and I should show a guilty and unfriendly indifference about your immortal interest, should I not recommend it to you, and caution you against those that appear insufficient. It matters little to me whether you use the ceremonial peculiarities of the church of England, or not, as I know they have but little concern with experimental religion; but our notions of the substance of vital piety ought to be well examined, and impartially formed, as a mistake here may be of pernicious consequences. But I must desist. May almighty grace prepare you for a glorious immortality! May

divine Providence be your guardian through the dangers of the boisterous ocean!

"May he, whose rod the hurricanes and storms,
And blust'ring waves in all their dreadful forms,
With calm adoring reverence obey;
May He with friendly vigilance preside
O'er the outrageous winds and boisterous tide,
And safe thro' crowds of deaths conduct your dangerous way."

"I commit two letters to your care, one to Dr. Doddridge, and one to Mr. Mauduit. Upon your arrival in London, please to write a few lines along with mine to Dr. Doddridge, informing him where to find you, that he may commit his answer to your care.

"And now, dear Sir, with affectionate salutations to your family, my whole self wishes you a most hearty farewell."

Mr. Davies, like every other intelligent and active Christian, possessed much of the spirit of a Missionary. This has appeared already in his concern for the souls of the poor ignorant slaves, and of the wandering Indians. "O how transporting is the thought," says he, in his journal already quoted, "that these barbarians (the Indians) may be cultivated by Divine grace in the use of proper means, and polished into genuine

disciples of the blessed Jesus!" The same spirit is more fully illustrated in the following extract from a letter to Dr. Bellamy, dated Feb. 23d, 1757.

"Upon some accounts I received of the willingness of the Catawba nation of Indians to receive a missionary and a schoolmaster, I wrote to Mr. Mauduit, Treasurer of the Society in London that support the Stockbridge mission, &c. with whom I contracted a particular acquaintance while in England, soliciting the charity of the Society for that purpose. The answer I received was favorable; and I was ordained to transmit all the intelligence I could get concerning the affair. Upon inquiry, I found the Cherokees were a nation of much more importance, both in a political and religious view; and that there was some encouragement that they would embrace the same proposal with the Catawbas. I therefore wrote to the Society, that if their funds would not enable them to support a mission and a school among both nations, they would drop the Catawbas, and make the Cherokees the object of their charity; because they are much more numerous, and

consequently their alliance is of more importance to us; and if Christianity were introduced among them, it would have a more extensive sphere of circulation; and because their situation exposes them much more to the intrigues of the French; and consequently there is much more danger of their deserting our interests, than the Catawbas, who are almost surrounded with English inhabitants. I suppose one missionary and one master might be tolerably sufficient for the Catawbas, as they are about 800 or 1000 souls; and the persons employed in this apostolic work could not be cut off from the society of their countrymen. But considering the number of the Cherokees, their great distance from our settlements, and the difficulties, if not impossibility, of a solitary missionary keeping up his spirits, and performing his work with cheerfulness in the society of savages, I proposed that, if possible, two missionaries and two masters might be sent to this nation.

"To this proposal I received an answer a few days ago, that the English Society had agreed to support one of each, upon condition that the Society in Scotland would do the same; and that the Society in London corresponding with

that in Scotland, had unanimously agreed to the proposal as far as it depended upon their concurrence, and had written to their constituents in Edinburgh in its favor. But as their answer was not returned, my informer could not give me a final account. But it seemed highly probable the scheme would be carried into execution.

"I think that Virginia, in some little time, will furnish us with one missionary and a schoolmaster, qualified for the business. But I have no prospect of any more. And as the matter requires expedition, and I would have every thing ready against I receive my final answer, which I now begin to expect every week, I write to you, my dear Sir, for all the intelligence you can give me, and all the assistance you can afford in procuring a missionary and a schoolmaster. I have heard Mr. Hawley's good character from sundry, I think from yourself; and that he has resigned his former mission. I therefore apply to him through your hands; and all that I now desire is, to be informed whether, upon proper encouragement he would be willing to engage in this apostolic work among those south western Indians."

The eminence and lustre of Mr. Davies's character as a *President*, were generally confessed. In his mode of governing the college, the firmness of authority was tempered with benignity, mildness, and condescension. He watched over his pupils with the tender solicitude of a father. He repressed their youthful irregularities by the gentlest methods possible; nor did he ever inflict punishment, without evident reluctance and pain. The consequence was, that he was equally revered and loved by every member of his literary family. They esteemed it not a confinement, but a privilege and happiness to be under his care. They complied with his injunctions and the general regulations of the seminary, less from fear, than from principle and inclination. In his method of instruction, there was something unusually captivating and impressive. Conveying his ideas with the utmost facility, and, by the aid of a lively imagination, imparting the charms of novelty, even to common subjects, he could not fail to rivet the attention of his pupils. And generously communicative, as he was, of his ample intellectual treasures, he was scarcely less sure to enrich their minds. But while thus

assiduous to promote the literary improvement of the youth committed to his charge, he was still more anxious and engaged to cultivate their hearts. He considered religion as unspeakably the best and brightest of all accomplishments; the only sure foundation, either of usefulness, honor or felicity. He therefore bent his principal attention, as every instructor should, to impress the youthful mind with the importance of this object. He seized with avidity every occasion to inculcate on his pupils, in private, the worth of their souls, and the pressing necessity of their immediately securing the blessings of salvation. And his public discourses bear frequent witness how near their immortal interests were to his heart. Toward the close of a new year's sermon, he expresses himself in this tender, glowing language: "I beg leave of my promiscuous auditory, to employ a few minutes in addressing myself to my important family, whom my paternal affection would always single out from the rest, even when I am speaking in general terms to a mixed crowd. Therefore, my dear charge, my pupils, my children, and every tender and endearing name! Ye young immortals, ye embryo angels or immortal fiends,

ye blooming, loving, fading flowers of human nature, the hope of your parents and friends, of church and state, the hope, joy and glory of your teachers! Hear one that loves you; one that has nothing to do in the world but to promote your best interest; one that would account this the greatest blessing he could enjoy in his pilgrimage; and whose nights and days are sometimes made almost equally restless by his affectionate anxieties for you: Hear him upon a subject in which you are most intimately interested; a subject the most important that even an apostle or an angel could address you upon, and that is, the right improvement of time, the present time, and preparation for eternity." He then proceeds to urge their immediate attention to religion, by the most cogent arguments, and in a manner peculiarly awakening and persuasive.

In another sermon, on this text; *And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil;*—we find the following pungent address to his pupils: "There is not one in a thousand of the sons of men that enjoys your advantages. Light, human and

divine, natural and supernatural, ancient and modern,—that is, knowledge of every kind shines upon you, and you are every day basking under its rays. You have nothing to do but to polish your minds, and, as it were, render them luminous. But let me put you in mind, that unless you admit the light of the glorious gospel of Christ to shine in your hearts, you will still be the children of darkness, and confined in the blackness of darkness forever. This is intolerably shocking even in supposition. Suppose any of you should be surrounded with more light than others, for no other purpose but that you may have a stronger conflict with conviction, and that your consciences may with greater force raise tumults and insurrections within you; suppose your sins should be the sins of men of learning and knowledge, the most daring and gigantic sins on this side hell; suppose you should turn out sinners of great parts, fine geniuses, like the fallen angels, those vast intellects, wise but wicked, wise to do evil, but without knowledge to do good; suppose it should be your highest character, that you can harangue well, that you know a few dead languages, that you have passed through a course

of philosophy; but as to that knowledge which sanctifies all the rest, and renders them useful to yourselves or others; that knowledge which alone can make you wise to salvation, and guide you to avoid the paths of destruction, you shun it, you hate it, and choose to remain contentedly ignorant in this important respect; suppose your parents who have been at the expense of your education; your friends who have entertained such high and pleasing expectations concerning you; church and state, that look to you for help, and depend upon you to fill stations of importance in the world, and your careful instructors, who observe your growing improvements with proportional pleasure; suppose that after all this generous labor, and all these pleasing prospects, they should see you at last doomed to everlasting darkness, for your voluntary abuse of the light you now enjoy; suppose these things, and——— but the consequences of these suppositions are so terrible, that I am not hardy enough to mention them. And, O! shall they ever become matters of fact!

"Therefore, my dear youth, admit the light, love it, and pursue it, though at first it should make such discoveries as may be painful to you;

for the pain will prove medicinal. By discovering your danger in time, you may be able to escape it; but never expect to remove it by the silly expedient of shutting your eyes."

Instructions thus faithful, delivered with the greatest tenderness, and enforced by a life of ardent, uniform piety, could scarcely fail to make the most important and salutary impressions on the minds of his youthful charge.

The public and official appearances of President Davies were marked with dignity, decorum and elegance. His performances at anniversary commencements reflected equal honor on himself and the institution, and afforded the highest gratification to the crowded auditories which those occasions brought together. But the work of the ministry was his chief delight. Here, emphatically, he was in his element. Here he was at home. He had, indeed, a lively and almost overwhelming sense of the magnitude of the sacred office, and of his insufficiency for its discharge. This is strikingly apparent from some passages in a letter to his friend, Dr. Gibbons. "It is an easy thing," says he, "to make a noise in the world, to flourish and harangue,

to dazzle the crowd, and set them all agape; but deeply to imbibe the spirit of Christianity; to maintain a secret walk with God; to be holy as he is holy; *this is the labor, this is the work.* The difficulty of the ministerial work seems to grow upon my hands. Perhaps once in three or four months, I preach in some measure as I could wish: that is, I preach as in the sight of God, and as if I were to step from the pulpit to the supreme tribunal. I *feel* my subject. I melt into tears, or I shudder with horror, when I denounce the terrors of the Lord. I glow, I soar in sacred ecstacies, when the love of Jesus is my theme; and, as Mr. Baxter was wont to express it, in lines more striking to me than all the fine poetry in the world,

> 'I preach as if I ne'er should preach again;
> And as a dying man to dying men.'

"But alas! my spirits soon flag, my devotions languish, and my zeal cools. It is really an afflicting thought, that I serve so good a Master with so much inconstancy: but so it is, and my soul mourns upon that account."

The same humble and self-diffident spirit breathes in the following paragraph, which we

find at the beginning of one of his discourses: "To preside in the solemnities of public worship, to direct your thoughts, and choose for you the subjects of your mediation, in those sacred hours which you spend in the house of God, and upon the right improvement of which your everlasting happiness so much depends—this is a province of the most tremendous importance that can be devolved on a mortal; and every man in the sacred office, who knows what he is about, must tremble at the thought, and be often anxiously perplexed what subject he shall choose, what he shall say upon it, and in what manner he shall deliver his message. His success in a great measure depends upon his choice; for though the blessed Spirit is the proper agent, and though the best means, without his efficacious concurrence, are altogether fruitless, yet he is wont to bless those means that are best adapted to do good. After a long course of languid and fruitless efforts, which seem to have been unusually disowned by my divine Master, what text shall I choose out of the inexhaustible treasure of God's word? In what new method shall I speak upon it? What new, untried experiments shall I make? Blessed

Jesus! my heavenly Master! direct thy poor perplexed servant, who is at a loss, and knows not what to do: direct him that has tried, and tried again, all the expedients he could think of, but almost in vain, and now scarcely knows what it is to hope for success."

Respecting Mr. Davies' appearance in the pulpit, an eminent minister,* who intimately knew him, has given the following testimony: "His manner of delivery, as to pronunciation, gesture, and modulation of voice, seemed to be a perfect model of the most moving and striking oratory. Whenever he ascended the sacred desk, he seemed to have not only the attention, but all the various passions of his auditory, entirely at his command. And as his personal appearance was august and venerable, yet benevolent and mild, so he could speak with the most commanding authority, or melting tenderness, according to the variation of his subject. With what majesty and grandeur, with what energy and striking solemnity, with what powerful and almost irresistible eloquence would he illustrate the truths, and inculcate the duties of Christianity. He spoke as on the borders of

* Rev. Mr. Bostwick, of New York.

eternity, and as viewing the glories and terrors of the unseen world, and conveyed the most grand and affecting ideas of these important realities."

Though to some, this description may seem like the partial, undistinguishing panegyric of a friend, there is much reason to rely on its truth and accuracy. There are those still living who repeatedly heard Mr. Davies preach, and who speak of his public performances as combining a solemnity, a pathos and animation truly wonderful, such as seemed directly to result from a lively sense of a present Deity, together with a most tender, fervent benevolence to the souls of men. The effects were in some measure answerable. It is said that he seldom preached, without producing some visible emotions in great numbers present; and seldom without some saving impressions being left on one or more of his auditory. That this should have been the case, will not probably appear surprising to those who attentively peruse the volumes of his printed discourses, and reflect that the selection was made after his death, from such as he ordinarily preached. The world is in possession of a great variety of excellent and invaluable sermons. Yet, if aptitude to accomplish the great ends for

which sermons are needed, be considered as the standard of merit, few extant are superior to those of President Davies.

Their chief and prominent excellence is doubtless this: they abound in clear, forcible, and affecting delineations of the distinguishing doctrines of the gospel. The utter depravity of man; the sovereignly free grace of Jehovah; the divinity of Christ; the atonement in his blood; regeneration and sanctification by the Holy Spirit; these were his favorite themes. On these he never ceased to insist and expatiate. He viewed these doctrines as constituting the essence of the Christian scheme; the grand support of vital and practical religion. He considered their intelligent and cordial reception as of the highest importance; and viewed every attempt to subvert and explain them away, as equally hostile to the truth of God, and the best interests of men. On these points, he was uniformly explicit, decided, and strenuous.

Still he defended the truth, and even repelled those errors which he viewed most dangerous, in the spirit of love and meekness. None could be more distant from pressing unhallowed human passion into the service of God. In his

sermons, we find none of those asperities by which religion has too often been dishonored. Truth appears in an attitude and aspect, not only majestic, but graceful and attractive.

Even in his most pungent and awakening addresses to the unconverted, the spirit of benevolence and compassion is obviously predominant. Perhaps there are no sermons which depict, in more striking and awful colors, the guilt, the wretchedness and danger of the impenitent. Yet, who does not see, that a tender, trembling concern for their best interests prompts and pervades the whole? And where is the sinner, who can refrain from taking the preacher's part against himself?

These sermons contain frequent descriptions of the nature and evidences of real religion. They exhibit it as commencing in repentance and faith, as continued by a course of mortification and self-denial, and as manifesting itself by substantial fruits of holiness and virtue. So luminous and striking are these delineations, and so accurately do they distinguish genuine religion, both from its opposites and counterfeits, that it seems scarcely possible that any one should attentively peruse them, and yet

remain ignorant of his real state. His discourses upon the *poor and contrite in spirit*, upon the *bruised reed*, and upon the *spiritually whole and sick*, abound with discriminating remarks on character, and with consolations for the weakest, the most dejected and trembling believer.

It is no small recommendation of the sermons of Mr. Davies, that while intelligible to the meanest capacities, they are calculated to gratify persons of the greatest knowledge and refinement. They abound with striking thoughts, with the beauties and elegances of expression, and with the richest imagery. Some critics may perhaps object to his style, as florid and ornamented in the extreme. But it should be remembered that nature made him a poet; and that a brilliant imagination, operating on a warm heart, familiarized him to forms of expression, which, in others, might seem unnatural and affected. On the whole, it may be properly remarked, that his style, though rich and entertaining, is rather a dangerous model for imitation. Young preachers, by following it too closely, might be betrayed into a manner ill suited to their genius. Let them study to re-

semble President Davies in his piety, his zeal, and his fidelity in exploring and communicating truth; but let them not be too emulous of soaring upon the wing of his vigorous and excursive imagination.